JAMES HANLEY: MODERNISM AND THE WORKING CLASS

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ABSTRACT

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James Hanley: Modernism and the Working Class

This thesis examines the work of James Hanley (1901-1985), a working-class ordinary seaman who became a professional writer for most of his adult life. His reputation was made originally during the 1930s when he was often identified with the emergent group of industrial-based 'proletarian' realists. However, Hanley's writing radically departs from conventional notions of realism and will be shown to have closer associations with both mainstream and sub-cultural forms of modernism.

Theoretically, the thesis is grounded in Georg Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness*, which argues that the 'totality' of social relations is made intelligible only through a working-class realization of the dialectic. His social insight is then adapted and, along with other compatible Marxist readings, developed for a literary theory which argues that, read dialectically, working-class interventions reveal the conflictual and contradictory aspects of literary formations and movements.

Hanley's life and career is characterized by what is consistently represented as a 'class struggle' at both the social and textual levels: a pervasive phenomenon whereby marginal initiatives both resist and affirm the ideology of the dominant culture. Hanley is also interesting in terms of his spatial and temporal range which, unlike that of other working-class writers, is confined neither to that moment of the 1930s, nor to the workplace, but addresses the broad spectrum of 20th-century British history and culture, including the crisis moments of two world wars, and the salient questions of modernity: political engagement and retreat, individuality and community, country and city.

Methodologically, such a complexity is more fully explained by an intertextual approach which locates Hanley within both a European tradition and various currents of contemporary writing. It is argued that class is the key determining factor in understanding both these processes, and the analagous problematics of Hanley's social trajectory, each of which are shown to have profound textual consequences. Empirically, the social and cultural sources of his work are traced from the place of his origins, Liverpool, through the domain of the sea, to the modern world of metropolitan publishing and finally to rural Wales, his adopted country.

The thesis concludes that interpreting modernism through the category of class has implications for developing general theories of literary culture: namely that cultural phenomena cannot be characterized by any singular factor or process, but are more adequately interpreted dialectically, that is to say as the result of a struggle between competing meanings of tradition, reality, history and art.

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JAMES HANLEY: CHRONOLOGY

1901	September 15th: born Dublin, son of Brigid Roche and Edward Hanley, ship's stoker.
1909	Family migrates to 21, Othello St, Kirkdale, Liverpool.
1910	Sectarian violence at its height during the General Election campaign.
1911	June - August: the Great Liverpool Transport Strike.
1914	July: leaves school, works briefly in a shipping office while awaiting berth as ordinary seaman. August: First World War begins while on his first voyage. During the war, works mostly on converted merchant ships, carrying troops to the Dardanelles.
1915	Elder brother Joe killed in action in France.
1917	April: disappointed at not being made AB grade seaman, jumps ship at New Brunswick and enlists (under age) in the 236th Canadian Battalion.
1918	August: Gassed in action at Bapaume. Invalided out, hospitalized in Lancashire, returns to Toronto to be discharged, then Liverpool.
1919-30	Returns to sea for one long voyage, works at a variety of jobs, but mostly as a railway porter. Writes constantly, including occasional articles and reviews for the Liverpool press. Teaches himself the piano.
1929	Begins correspondence with John Cowper Powys, then living in America.
1930	February: *Drift* published by Eric Partridge's Scholartis Press March: Moves to London, staying briefly with C J Greenwood, then Charles Lahr. Writes and publishes *The German Prisoner* from Lahr's Muswell Hill home. August: Begins work on *Boy* (then a short story). Greenwood hand-prints *A Passion Before Death*. October: embarks on trip to north Wales.
1931	Meets at her father's lodge near Betws-y-Coed, Dorothy Enid Thomas (known as Timmy), daughter of Enid Langton and Frank Augustus Heathcote, industrialist. February: The Bodley Head rejects *Boy*. March: rents from Hiraethog District Council one of a group of new cottages, Penllwyn, at Tynant, near Corwen. May: Timmy joins him at Penllwyn as Mrs Hanley. September 3rd: Boriswood publish *Boy* in expurgated edition. September 18th: The Bodley Head publish his first book of short stories, *Men in Darkness*, with a preface by John Cowper Powys.
1933	February: temporary move to London for two months for Timmy's confinement. March: son (Liam Powys Hanley) born.
1934	February: at the invitation of Montagu Slater, involved in setting up the British section of the Writers International. May: signs contract with his favoured publishers Chatto & Windus. November: *Left Review* publishes extract from the forthcoming *The Furys*. Copies of *Boy* seized by the police from the Bury branch of National Libraries.

1935	February: moves to Bryn Derwen, Cynwyd. *The Furys* published. March: the publication of *Boy* is judged an obscene libel; Boriswood directors are convicted and fined, all copies seized and destroyed. May: at Hanley's instigation, John Cowper Powys becomes his neighbour at nearby Corwen. June: delegate to the International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture. Hanley's friend, E M Forster, speaks in defence of *Boy*.
1936	March: moves back to Tynant to a much larger house, Glan Ceirw. April: Hanley judges 'Schooldays' writing competition in *Left Review*. Jack Kahane's Obelisk Press publishes in Paris an unexpurgated pirate edition of *Boy*. Autumn: along with John Cowper Powys, is made bard at a local eisteddfod. Winter: commissioned by *The Spectator* to investigate the distressed areas of South Wales.
1937	November: result of Hanley's Welsh journey, *Grey Children*, published by Methuen.
1938	Renews contract with The Bodley Head. *The Hollow Sea* published, and is received with much critical acclaim. July: begins to submit radio plays to the BBC.
1939	Leaving their friend Paul Sheridan in charge, Glan Ceirw is put up for sale while the Hanleys depart for London. September: soon after war is declared, Hanley begins to write propagandist articles for various journals.
1939-40	At temporary addresses, including, from August 1940, a furnished flat in Chelsea during the Blitz.
1941	January: moves to the village of Llanfechain, Montgomeryshire. Begins to write propaganda plays for the BBC. April: *The Ocean*, his visionary novel of war at sea, published. May: on BBC recommendation, is granted exemption from military service.
1942	May - July: works as a full-time writer for the BBC in London. While here, meets and befriends Reginald Moore (editor of the journal *Modern Reading*) and his novelist wife, Elizabeth Berridge. At Hanley's suggestion, they also move to Llanfechain.
1943	Two more wartime novels published, *Sailor's Song* and *No Directions* (about an artist living through the Blitz).
1945	Begins to submit, again, plays and stories to the BBC Regions.
1947	Finally marries Timmy.
1950	His close friends, the Moores, return to London.
1951	Disappointed with poor sales of his novels, invents a pseudonym. *The House in the Valley* (by Patric Shone) published by Cape.
1952-8	Productive period follows during which the key mature works are written: two Conradian novels, *The Closed Harbour* (1952) and *Levine* (1956); his celebration of Welsh rural life, *The Welsh Sonata* (1954), and the final Furys novel, *An End and a Beginning* (1958).
1953	Begins to be regularly broadcast in the BBC regions.

1958	Is increasingly disillusioned by the reception of his fiction and resolves to concentrate on drama: his first successful radio play, *I Talk to Myself*, produced by the influential producer of Beckett, Donald MacWhinnie.
1962	August: play, *Say Nothing*, performed at Theatre Royal, Stratford East for four weeks, directed by Richard Rhys (Lord Dynevor).
1963	Finally leaves Wales: moves to a flat in Camden Square, North London.
1964	February: first TV play, *Say Nothing*, broadcast by the BBC. Eight more follow during the next five years. September: Richard Rhys provides a Welsh retreat for the Hanleys at Dynevor Castle lodge, Llandeilo.
1966	March: Hanley's most successful Wednesday Play, *A Walk in the Sea*, broadcast by BBC.
1968	January: moves to a flat in Lissenden Mansions, Highgate.
1970	Receives an Arts Council grant of £1000 through the sponsorship of his friend, the novelist Paul Scott.
1972	First novel for ten years, *Another World*, published by André Deutsch.
1978	Deutsch publish his last novel, *A Kingdom*. No more original works are published but he continues to write.
1980	September: Timmy Hanley, his partner of fifty years, dies. December: finally moves to a small flat in Lissenden Gardens, Highgate, close to his son Liam.
1983	Penguin Books reprints *The Furys* as a Twentieth Century Classic.
1985	November 11th: still occupied with writing projects, dies in London.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the work of James Hanley (1901-1985), a working-class ordinary seaman who became a professional writer for most of his adult life. His reputation was made originally during the 1930s when he was often identified with the emergent group of 'proletarian' realists whose collective concerns were primarily the workplaces and communities of industrial Britain. However, both during this initial period and beyond into the post-war period, Hanley's writing radically departs from the received notions of what defines the 'working-class' writer and his or her work. Therefore, although the present work concentrates on one representative figure, Hanley's work will also be shown to have general implications for the issue of class and its relation to cultural productivity, particularly to that form which has been generally conceived to be the antithesis of working-class realism: namely modernism.

It was during the years 1976 to 1984 that a whole tradition of working-class writing was re-discovered and, with the organization of such events as the Essex Conferences and the pioneering work of researchers in both East and West Germany, the process of 'recovery' seemed to be under way.[1] However, with a few notable exceptions, relatively little research has been undertaken in Britain to advance those studies beyond their initial moment, and publishing ventures carried out in parallel to the academic work - such as Lawrence and Wishart's series of reprints from the 1930s and the Merlin Press's Radical Fiction series - have failed to maintain their original impetus.[2]

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[1] See, for instance, the work of H Gustav Klaus from the University of Osnabrück and of those grouped around Jack Mitchell at Humboldt University, Berlin in the former German Democratic Republic. For a representative selection of internationally co-ordinated work see Klaus, 1982; and Behrend, Neubert and Mitchell, 1990; for a survey of the Essex Conferences see Barker et al, 1986, pp. ix-xvi, but particularly the published proceedings of the Essex Conference for 1978, *1936: The Sociology of Literature* (Barker et al, 1979, pp. 134-178).

[2] Tribute must be paid here to the continuing example of Andy Croft, who, in the field of adult education and radio has done much to popularize the genre, and to such courses as Ian Heywood's on working-class writing at the Roehampton Institute (See Croft 1990).

Part of the reason for this decline in the intervening years has been the emergence of a postmodern tendency to subordinate class issues: politically to the priorities of consensus and economic feasibility, and culturally to the relativizing dominant of postmodernism itself. Yet such recent events as the ongoing Liverpool Dockers Strike and the renaissance in working-class writing from Scotland are a clear indication that class consciousness continues to be central to the way people live their actual lives, particularly within those communities in traditional areas of British industry which have been economically devastated since the consolidation of Conservative power during the 1980s. Thus, it is not without a sense of continuing relevance that this thesis returns to the category of class through the Liverpool writer James Hanley, to address some unfinished arguments from those earlier debates and to suggest new ways of approaching working-class forms of literary production.

One of the major problems with some of the original approaches is that no overall theory of working-class writing has been developed to cope with the multiplicity of forms which have evolved since the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, most critical work in the field tends to deploy the readily available Marxist formulas: assessing a work according to its evident commitment or on the basis of the conventional social-realist criteria. An earlier formulation of this method is Walter Allen's *Tradition and Dream*, which enthusiastically includes John Hampson, James Hanley, Frank Tilsey and Walter Greenwood in its survey but ultimately relegates them to 'the merely local and temporary issue of working-class life and struggle' in comparison to the 'totality' and 'vision' of Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* (Allen, 1965, p. 252). Since then, that tendency implicitly to reduce the literary value of less explicitly political writers has been unproblematically carried over into later Marxist analyses. Thus despite much worthy and original work by, among others, Carole Snee and Roy Johnson on Walter Brierley, Stephen Constantine on Walter Greenwood, Craig and Egan on Brierley and Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Brian Scobie on Gibbon, Gustav Klaus on the moment of 1936, Jack Mitchell on the Scottish working-class novel, there has been a common tendency to suppress the inherent dialectic or ideological complexity in working-class texts in favour

of their 'political accentuation' or their conformity to a prevailing political orthodoxy.[3]

Much more useful for the purposes of constructing a coherent and consistent theory of working-class writing are those critical commentators who offer a more complex or dialectical model. Among the more significant interventions are Deirdre Burton's 'interrogative' feminist reading of *A Scots Quair*, Tony Davies's argument for 'realism' as 'a contested space, the scene of an unfinished argument' and Graham Holderness on 'non-naturalism' in the tradition of mining novels (See Burton, Davies, T, Holderness, 1984). More recently, Pamela Fox has been one of the few who have followed Deirdre Burton's example: interrogating a masculinized critical paradigm and constructing a dialectical feminist critique around the notion of working-class resistance through 'romance' (Fox, 1994). All such work has been invaluable in its collective formal challenge to the dominant realist mode of reading working-class writing, but the most illuminating for the purposes of this thesis is Ken Worpole's essay, 'Expressionism and Working-Class Fiction' in his 1983 study. Here, Worpole identifies a loose 'school' of Liverpool writers - James Hanley, Jim Phelan and George Garrett - whose common formal properties derive not from a conventional English 'realism', but from a more broadly European 'expressionist' style: the result of a wider access to a range of cultures during their years as merchant seamen (Worpole, 1983, pp. 77-93).

The implications of his argument are not only that the constituent elements of working-class culture are more diverse than the social - or socialist - realist paradigm would indicate, but that there is something qualitatively distinct about a working-class perspective which, because of its habituation to the extremes of social experience, finds adequate expression particularly in non-realist forms. Expressionism, as Ernst Bloch

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[3] For those mentioned see Constantine, 1982, pp. 232-247; Brian Scobie, 'Lewis Grassic Gibbon', H. Gustav Klaus, 'Socialist Novels of 1936' in Klaus, 1982, pp. 134-142, 143-162; Craig and Egan, 1979; Johnson, 1975, 1976; Mitchell, 1974, 1975; and Snee, 1976, 1979. See also Smith, 1978 which proposes a too narrowly socialist critique and John Lucas's edited volume on the 1930s which, although it collectively refutes an entrenched opinion (Julian Symons and Samuel Hynes) that the decade's so-called literary failings are attributable to a subordination of art to politics, nevertheless sets an interpretive agenda which limits the discursive field to a negative critique of the texts' political allegiances (Lucas, 1978).

argues, is characterized by 'its closeness to the people', the *Blue Rider* school of expressionist painting having found inspiration in forms as diverse as Nordic decorative folk-art - which it defined as a 'secret Gothic tradition'- the drawings of children and prisoners, and 'the disturbing works of the mentally sick' (Bloch et al, 1980, pp. 24-26). It is therefore entirely comprehensible that the world of the itinerant sailor, pre-occupied as it is with 'criminal underworlds, red-light districts and dockside life', is represented in forms which appear at once primitive and experimental.

What more fundamentally determines those forms is a consciousness which grasps its own 'reification'. As Georg Lukács argues, though not in relation to working-class writing per se, it is the proletariat which as a class is uniquely able to comprehend the totality of capitalist society: namely the reduction of all relations and values to that of the commodity, a dominant condition in which 'the principle of rational mechanisation and calculability must embrace every aspect of life' (Lukács, 1971, p. 91). The qualitative difference between bourgeois and proletarian thought is that the former is bound by its antinomies - 'between subject and object, freedom and necessity, individual and society, form and content' - which are the result of a purely quantitative, formal and abstract rationality and, therefore, is unable to grasp the material substratum of irrationality which lies beyond the limitations of its cultural horizon. The latter, however, through the dialectic, resolves the problems of antinomy and comes to a consciousness of itself - the subject - as object (i.e. worker as commodity), which recognition represents a qualitative comprehension of the social totality:

> [The worker's] fate is typical of society as a whole in that this self-objectification, this transformation of a human function into a commodity reveals in all its starkness the dehumanised and dehumanising function of the commodity relation. (Ibid, p. 92)

The worker perceives that by selling [his] labour power,

> his only commodity, he integrates it (and himself: for his commodity is inseparable from his physical existence) into a specialised process that has been rationalised and mechanised, a process that he discovers already existing, complete and able to function without him and in which he is no more than a cipher reduced to an abstract quantity, a mechanised and rationalised tool.

(Ibid, p. 166)

The consequences for a theory of working-class writing are that the experience of reification determines the often figurative or non-realist quality of its forms. Thus the writing itself, while it is often grounded in a putative realism, will nonetheless adopt descriptive or allegorical modes in which meaning does not so much depend on a realist plausibility, but on a symbolic or metaphoric representation of certain forms of consciousness. To take the example of one of Hanley's contemporaries, Walter Brierley has been described as a writer who, in his use of an 'over-emphatic naturalism', discloses 'lower middle-class attitudes lurking beneath an apparently proletarian surface' (Johnson, 1976, p. 5). However, what that realist reading fails to see is that Brierley's methods move beyond a mere 'naturalism' to defy the conventional expectations of bourgeois plot or narrative development. On the contrary, the episodic and metaphoric nature of his works suggest a less realist and more expressionistic level of reading consistent with a perception that human beings are determined by forces external to their individual will. Thus the narrative focus on a 'means test man' or 'sandwichman' precisely represents those conditions of unemployment where the social relations of human beings have been reduced to a static or reified state. Similarly, other commentators have been concerned with the problematics of Hanley's political 'commitment' (see Williams, P, 1990, pp. 92-99) yet Hanley's symbolic transformations of workers into automata, as in stories such as 'Stoker Haslett', 'The Last Voyage' or 'Feud' are expressions of a reduced condition in which actions are determined by the logic or inexorability of automatic response rather than by any linearity or feasible plot construction.

However, to argue for such a complexity is not to suggest that those forms emerge spontaneously from a working-class consciousness, but rather that they are formulated as the result of a dual relationship, at once in accordance and in conflict with the priorities of the dominant class, such that the individual writer's engagement is determined by a 'class struggle' at the textual or cultural level. In Lukács's terms, the antinomy of bourgeois rationalism arises from an inability to overcome its central problem: namely, as a system of thought which conceives the world 'as its own product... the product of mind', to encompass that which Kant referred to as 'the thing-in-itself', the realm of 'the

given' or 'concrete content' (Ibid, p. 111). Various attempts at resolution have been inevitably confounded by 'the limits of abstract contemplation' (Ibid, p. 127) since modern philosophy, in its dependence on a rational principle of abstraction - formulating universal and immutable laws which exclude the possibility of human intervention - fails to account for the concrete, the practical, the mutable. Instead, bourgeois thought accepts the antinomies themselves as constitutive of 'a simply unquestionable reality' and perpetuates the real world of objects as 'irrational' and beyond its epistemological grasp (Ibid, p. 156). The only moment of hope for Lukács is the 'principle of art' which ostensibly is able to overcome the duality of subject and object through the medium of the imaginary or of 'aesthetic representation' in which the 'irrational' or concrete becomes in some way purposive and:

> proffers us [...] the consciousness, beyond all theoretical demonstration that we are at home in the world because the world is somehow mysteriously designed to suit our capacities. (Eagleton, 1990, p. 85)

Such is what Eagleton terms, 'the ideology of the aesthetic', which for the contemplative subject creates out of the unknowable world of objects a 'heuristic fiction which permits [...] a sense of purposiveness, centredness and significance' (Ibid, p. 85). It is that will to transcendence through the aesthetic which constitutes the foundation for much 19th-century art, the basic drive of the romantic movement and that which dominates such late romantic writers as Conrad. Yet as Fredric Jameson has argued it is the emergence of certain forms of modernism which begins to problematize those ideological formations. In Conrad 'romance' is only one constituent element in a body of work in which 'vertical repression and layering or sedimentation' constitute the 'dominant structure' (Jameson, 1989, pp. 213-214): it also comprises a '"realistic" presentation of working life at sea', where 'the ground bass of material production continues underneath the new formal structures of the modernist text' (Ibid, p. 217). However whatever the realities of the 'material substratum', those are suppressed through what Jameson describes as 'strategies of containment' in which the physical hardships of the merchant service are re-presented in terms of a fierce '*ressentiment*' or as an ultimate expression of an 'existentializing

metaphysics',[4] but more particularly through the new modernist aesthetic of 'impressionism' which, because it essentially 'offers the exercise of perception and the perceptual recombination of sense data as an end in itself', is one more example of the 'semi-autonomous activity' of the modern reified consciousness (Ibid, p. 230).

Jameson's essay on Conrad's modernism here is precisely apposite because Hanley's cultural orientation is to write against the dominating aesthetic of his formidable predecessor from a different modernist perspective. Hanley, as an ordinary seaman and a working-class writer, does not display the same characteristics of a reified consciousness but rather radically reveals the actual processes of reification themselves. Thus the struggles and frustrations of his ordinary seamen are represented both in terms of a grounded realism but also through a figural reduction of human beings to their material functions, a radical expression in which the human figure becomes a thing: commodity, machine part, or manipulated marionette. Yet Hanley's writing is also constituted by a modernist textual layering in which the conventions, attitudes and values of a traditional literary culture are discovered both to blend and conflict with those of his own class orientation. Thus the ordinary seaman also struggles with the sea in its symbolic form, both as existentialist metaphor of ultimate intractability, and also - not mentioned by Jameson, but nevertheless a palpable aspect of Conrad's romanticism - as that indomitable and unpolluted realm of the natural world which is a compensation for, or an escape from, the effects of reification.

Hanley's struggle is characteristic of a wider cultural process in which marginalized initiatives both resist and affirm the dominant culture, yet at the same time are more conducive to an expression of - in Lukácsian terms - the social 'totality'. If that is true, then Hanley's work is also exemplary in terms of its spatial and temporal range. It is not, as with other working-class writers, confined either to that moment of the 1930s, or to

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[4] The former being an 'ideologeme' of Nietzsche's: his vision of history which proposes a slave mentality for the mass of the defeated who, without the ability to act, 'preserve themselves from harm through the exercise of imaginary vengeance'. The latter relates to Conrad's metaphysic of 'the absurdity of existence in the face of a malevolent Nature' (Jameson, 1989, pp. 201, 216).

the workplace (although the metaphoric presence of the sea is detectable throughout his extensive oeuvre), but spans the broad spectrum of 20th-century British history and culture, including those crisis moments of two world wars, and the emergent questions of modernity: political engagement and retreat, individuality and community, country and city. Such a structure determines an intertextual approach in which Hanley is identified not as an isolated figure but one who is continually engaged with both the mainstream and sub-cultural movements of the century. What principally informs the method, however, is not a conventional 'life and times' but the interpretive thread of class and the way in which it operates at all levels of Hanley's cultural and social interventions. Hanley's life will be shown to follow an unusual pattern of experience for his time which, however, with the wider availability of secondary and tertiary education, became increasingly familiar for many working-class people: the disruption of normal life expectations, the movement from traditional and local to new kinds of social relation, and the consequent tension between communal and newly made allegiances. To understand the continuing homologous relation between Hanley's social trajectory and the developments in his writing, it is first of all necessary to locate him within the formative place of his origins, the Irish community of Liverpool, and then to explore the three subsequent geographical or cultural domains with which, as a writer, he was engaged: the sea (the place of his original calling); the city (his confrontation with the metropolitan world, his retrospection on Liverpool); and Wales (his place of residence for the greater part of thirty-three years).

CHAPTER 1. LIVERPOOL: THE NON-CONTEMPORANEOUS CITY

> Not all people exist in the same Now. They do so only externally, through the fact that they can be seen today. But they are thereby not yet living at the same time as the others. They rather carry an earlier element with them; this interferes. Depending on where someone stands physically, and above all in terms of class, he has his times. Older times than the modern ones continue to have an effect in older strata [...] The workers are no longer alone with themselves and the employers. Much earlier powers, from a very different bottom, begin between them. (Bloch, 1991, p. 97)

Ernst Bloch's concept of the 'non-contemporaneous contradictions' of modernity was originally applied to the phenomenon of National Socialism in Germany during the early 1930s. However, as this chapter will show, it has a particular relevance for a social understanding of Liverpool, the Hanley family's adopted city. Liverpool - second only to London in its crucial imperial position - will be identified, through certain aspects of its history, as a space of 'internal colonization' (Spivak, 1991, p. 155) in which the separate cultural, social and political histories of the colonizers and the colonized both conjoin and conflict. Liverpool's rôle in establishing an English imperialist hegemony has been to represent to its internally colonized peoples - particularly the Irish - a nationalist version of the process of historical change, which assumes the privileged status of 'modern' to deprecate and suppress the significance of other modes of time-consciousness. But the privileging of what is ostensibly a temporal category is to evoke modernity's problematic which Peter Osborne has defined as 'its homogenization through abstraction of a form of historical consciousness associated with a variety of socially, politically, and culturally heterogeneous processes of change' (Osborne, 1992, p. 66). Colonial discourse homogenizes discrete histories under the rubric of modernity so that 'synchronic comparisons are ordered diachronically to produce a scale of development that defines 'progress' in terms of the projection of certain people's presents as other people's futures' (Ibid, p. 75). To privilege the colonialist's time-conception over and above that of the colonized subject is thus to establish modernity's qualitative rather than its chronological difference from other modes of temporal experience. In the context of Liverpool, the

spatially and temporally discrete experience of the Irish migrant is continually confronted by a privileged mode of time-consciousness which signals at once the 'stasis' of Irish society and the 'progress' of modern English city life. Yet Liverpool's imperialist assertion of its own modernity is itself contradictory in that its putative prosperity and progress are undermined by a residual archaism which cannot be confined to its so-called immigrant population, but rather is immanent and all-pervading.

If, as will be argued, Hanley's writing has a particular capacity to represent the social totality, then, in terms of its structural homology with Liverpool, it registers the alienating effects of temporal disjunction, disclosing a problematic relationship with the prevailing literary preference for novelty and contemporaneity. At the moment of his first publications in the early 1930s, his reputation was to a degree dependent on a recent discovery and exploration of **contemporary** working-class experience and Hanley himself was keen to project a 'modernist' identity. But a close reading reveals that he was also concerned, not only with the industrial conditions of the 1930s, but with a world which was fast being eclipsed: the heritage of the sea and traditional Ireland on which his family depended for its sense of pride and self-esteem. That set of temporal inconsistencies is concentrated in Hanley's representations of Liverpool, thus creating a radical uncertainty as to his precise contemporaneity. Liverpool's presence in Hanley's early works is palpable, but the city as it is represented has not the quality of a modern metropolitan London - to be found for example in the novels of Grahame Greene or Patrick Hamilton - but remains the space for the convergence of two temporally discrete worlds: that of the modern city and of colonized Ireland. The resulting incongruity is also manifest in Hanley's style which, at times, hovers precariously between an experimental modernism and a more traditional realist form. Hanley's literary reaction to the shock of displacement from the original Dublin environment is both to collude in and resist the imposed temporal structure: there is on the one hand a new critical relationship with the past which is consistent with a 'modernist' sensibility, while on the other, the rupture in the consciousness of his own history requires the re-assurance of communal values and 'native' allegiances. Paradoxically, Hanley's writing emerges from the struggle between the assertion of a modern consciousness and its own self- repudiation.

The city of Liverpool underpins the structure of Hanley's 'modernism' in that its history, similarly, has been determined by a struggle between a troubled, yet still persistent past, and a modernistic present: the temporal imposition of modernity onto an older yet persistent set of social and political practices. An essential component of that identity derives from its close physical, cultural and political relations with Ireland and with its ancient function as a sea port. The genesis of Hanley's particular world-view has its roots in the formative years of his early childhood in Dublin. His father, Edward Hanley, was born in the prestigious Merrion Square, the same street whose No.1 was once the townhouse of Sir William and Lady Jane Wilde, and the family of James's mother - who had received a 'sound' Ursuline education - was equally 'well placed' in the nearby St Patrick's Square. Edward Hanley began his working life as a printer/proof-reader and there was some suggestion of him entering the legal profession with encouragement from his ambitious mother, but all such hopes were peremptorily dashed when he ran away to sea. Hanley's grandmother complained that, despite her plans for him at 'the Queen's Court' of Dublin, she was defeated by her son's 'contrary' nature and 'hot temper'. For her it was 'crazy' that a man should be '"... handling briefs one day and the next hanging on by his shirt tails to the top-gallant mast, or whatever the devil they call those queer things they have on ships..."' (Hanley, 1937a, pp. 2,3).

In the above extract from his 'autobiographical excursion', *Broken Water* (1937), the young James is being discouraged from going to sea, like his father, for whose sudden impulse the only reason offered is that he wanted 'to indulge to the full his romantic urge' (Ibid, p. 2). The enigma of why a man destined for a professional career should suddenly abandon it for a life at sea still persists in the Hanley family. Nonetheless, the origin of that 'romantic urge' can be traced to Hanley's mother's family, the Roches - sailing boat captains and ships' pilots out of Queenstown, Cork - who boasted a long tradition of professional seamanship. Thus, it was the sea-going life itself - its association of professional competence with male prowess, its sexual rather than its domestic connotations - which was the attraction for Hanley's father.[5] Clearly, the aura of

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[5] According to Liam Hanley, James's son (and only child), the status of pilot was reckoned to be superior to ship's master and the present generation is still keen to stress its nobility of lineage, which can be traced back to chieftains from Roscommon on

romance surrounding the sea, with the added legitimating function of professionalism, was preferable to the staid, bourgeois existence of The Queen's Court.

Edward Hanley's romanticism is by no means unique, as can be seen from a number of parallel incidents in the family history of Pat O'Mara, one of Hanley's exact contemporaries and a fellow Irish Liverpudlian. His father's family, similarly, 'had money and position and was well-known in Cheshire [...] an old Tipperary family that dated far back into Irish history'. Yet his father was 'an inherent rogue' who would 'never conform to the elegant life prescribed for him by his mother', and at sixteen he also ran away to sea, returning to 'the estate' nine months later destitute and 'with only a sea bag' (O'Mara, 1934, p. 160). Such recalcitrance, which expresses itself in romantic flight, is clearly not sustainable in the face of personal and financial disappointments. O'Mara's father's prodigality is mirrored in Edward Hanley's warning to his son, which betrays the disillusionment of a man who was to spend most of his life, not following in the tradition of professional seamanship, but as a fireman or ship's stoker: absent at sea for long periods, working in the 'Black Gang', the name for that section of a steamship's crew notorious for its hazardous and appalling working conditions. As he warned the young James, the sea might have looked good 'seeing it now, but it's a different matter when you find yourself in the middle of it' (Hanley, 1937a, p. 23). O'Mara gives a glimpse of 'the below crowd', as the firemen were also called, and the dirty conditions of their 'hovel':

> As I passed the fireman's forecastle, I saw them all seated around the dirty table... and almost all were tipsy and talking, cursing everything, particularly the ship. One tall thin fellow was examining the contents of his sea-bag dubiously; another was examining himself at the far end of the room while a third, watching him, commented critically: "You got it all right, all right. I told you about that two-penny bitch, didn't I?" (Ibid, p. 160)

O'Mara stresses the sordid and squalid conditions of the stoker's life as Edward Hanley would have encountered them, and James himself was to use the stoker figure as

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Hanley's father's side (Hanley, L, 1991).

emblematic of both working-class heroism and human degradation.[6]

Yet, despite his father having disappointed those expectations for a respectable career, Hanley's autobiography gives a nostalgic picture of Dublin family life, reminiscent of that in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The first chapter of *Broken Water* presents Edward Hanley, although already a seaman for some years, as the familiar down-at-heel petit-bourgeois, cursing the failings of a drunken coachman, bitterly regretting the political demise of Parnell. Such a representation of the Hanleys' original social position denies the received idea of James's 'proletarian' identity, yet both his and O'Mara's common concern for a detailed explication of class origins and the experience of decline is made intelligible by the history of Irish settlement, when the Irish migrant's self-esteem is shattered by the reality of his/her subordination within English society. It is not until the Irish traveller or migrant confronts the world beyond a relatively sheltered middle-class Cheshire or Dublin that self-conceptions of personal and social position begin to be rudely challenged in the wider experience of British imperialist and racist social relations. In effect, the move to Liverpool produced an effect of 'proletarianization' on the migrant middle class, and the cherishing of a former status or lost heritage restores in some measure the loss of esteem that comes with the conferred identity of 'immigrant'.

The Hanley family became Irish migrants about the year 1909, when it was felt the uncertain employment position of ship's fireman could be more regularized on mainland Britain, where, it was generally believed, the port of Liverpool provided an abundance of opportunity, especially in the transport and shipping industries. At that time Liverpool was the most successful port in the world - 11 miles of docks, the headquarters of the largest shipping lines, a huge sprawling cosmopolitan city, swollen by a continuous influx of migrant labour not only from Ireland but from most parts of the world:

> The city was at its peak in 1910... Red-ensigned merchant ships carried half of the whole world's waterborne international trade and the most potently famous ships of British mercantile power, the liners of Cunard

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[6] See Part II, Chapters 6 (p. 78) and 4 (p. 47) respectively: Chris Bush in *Stoker Bush* (1936) and Reilly in *The Last Voyage* (1931) the latter of which was based on Edward Hanley's last days at sea.

> and the White Star, were operated from grandiose offices on the Liverpool waterfront. Liverpool was the gateway of the British Empire [...] So many and so large were the fleets of passenger and cargo liners captained and crewed by Liverpudlians, swarmed over and serviced by tens of thousands of other citizens, that the scale and intensity of ocean-going and coastal traffic made Liverpool a city port like none had ever been before. (Lane, 1987, p. 22)

Yet this picture of prosperity and capitalist grandeur does not provide an adequate picture of the anomaly of Liverpool, which was determined by a number of contradictory elements. Modernization and mechanization were certainly manifest in the material characteristics of a great urban transport centre - docks, ships, railways, road haulage - but the very fact of its economy being dependent on a distributive rather than a manufacturing base was the cause of an asynchronous contradiction. The labour force's 'want of formal organization, traditional craft skills and independence', the 'casual, impermanent, and relatively unskilled' nature of the work were the cause of 'irregular wages and irregular ways' (Waller, 1981, p. xvi). Thus the disordered, unregulated nature of Liverpool life is fundamentally attributable to its economic base, which was exacerbated by its system of hiring labour. This relied on a large disparate surplus of workers kept in a condition of constant rivalry for a finite number of jobs. In the docks men and boys were hired on a daily or half-daily basis from 'stands', either by the foremen of ship-owners and merchants or by numerous self-employed master stevedores and porters. The system of hiring sea-going labour in the sheds was similarly casual and irregular. The process of selection was haphazard, corrupt, where men would fight 'like wolves with claws and teeth and blood for a day's pay' (Hanley, 1944a, p. 13).[7]

Hanley's early Liverpool stories give an impression of the chaos, the desperation at the heart of modern, prestigious Liverpool, where the potential efficiency that could be

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[7] This is Hanley's description of dockside working conditions in his first novel, *Drift* (1930) in which his protagonist Joe Rourke suffers chronic unemployment as part of the surplus pool of dock-labour (Hanley, 1944a, p. 13). See also the 'pandemonium' which opens the short story 'Narrative' in *Men in Darkness* (Hanley, 1931, pp. 2,4) and the uncertainty which governs the lives of Hanley's adolescent victims of the system of child labour in *Ebb and Flood* (Hanley, 1932, p. 128).

derived from the concentration of so many workers in one place was prevented by such a confused and archaic labour system. Yet the interests of the owners were better served by maintaining a system which would hamper any organized attempt to improve wages and conditions, since, as Sidney Webb observed 'it was so much more difficult for the men to strike against a number of different employers' (quoted in Waller, 1981, p. 3). Moreover, any actually existing collectivization came from small self-regulating traditional societies arranged by trade and/or sectarian allegiance, which James Sexton calls 'the caste system' dominated by 'innumerable small clubs and societies all hostile to each other' (Sexton, 1936, pp. 109, 110).

Sectarianism, then, was another major factor in the fundamentally contradictory structure of Liverpool's modernity. By the early 20th century, when the Hanleys arrived, the city had become, in its sharp sectarian residential divisions, 'a miniature Ulster': a virtual microcosm of the Northern Irish situation (Midwinter, 1971, p. 173). Orange Lodges had begun to proliferate in most large English towns with migrant Irish communities from the early 19th century: to the extremist Protestant, the Irish presence was evidence of a creed (Catholicism) and a foreign influence which constituted a fundamental threat to the English way of life. Liverpool's Orangeism was determined by the city's trading, colonial, and military connections with 'Ulster', a uniqueness which was attributable to what the city's Protestants perceived as '... the baleful shadow of Ireland which always lay across Liverpool' (Neal, 1988, p. 185). That sense of threat had been exacerbated when a steady increase in Irish migrants since the early 19th century, was suddenly swelled by a large influx during the years 1846-7 due to the effects of the Great Famine.[8]

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[8] Something of that bitter memory is recorded in Hanley's Liverpool novel, *The Furys*, when old Anthony Mangan, rendered chronically paralyzed and mute by a stroke, remembers the death by starvation of his mother:

> His mother lay between the sheets, like a wraith, her sunken cheek-bones made her look as though she were grinning at him. Anthony touched her face with his tiny hand. Touching it, he felt its coldness, and it seemed to him as though that face had never been, had never existed within his memory... (Hanley, 1935a, p. 171)

Despite their desperate poverty, an increased migrant labour force meant there was enormous potential for capital: 'the business community in the port certainly benefited from the large pool of unemployed Irish to the extent that Irish labour was widely used, and the presence of so many people looking for work could not fail to influence the wage levels paid to labourers' (Neal, 1988, p. 108). In fact, such was its value that, as one contemporary observed (1854), 'in the present state of the labour market, English labour would be almost unpurchasable if it were not for the competition of Irish labour' (Ibid, p. 109). Yet the effect of their presence was to compound the problems of an already over-supplied labour market. Indigenous members of the working class found themselves displaced by cheaper foreign labour and the enfranchised population complained of huge increases in the rates from the extra provision of poor relief. The seeds of racism toward the migrant Irish were sown in the inner city, where they were ghettoized in the worst of slum housing known as 'Courts':

> The term of course is ironic; what the "Court" represented was a narrow alley receding off the street to a large areaway, like an unseen tooth cavity, and ending in a conglomeration of filthy shacks...
> (O'Mara, 1934, p. 32)

In the conditions of irregular employment and poverty, they became the scapegoats for all those other aberrations of city life - criminality, disease (typhus went under the name of 'Irish fever'), drunkenness, debauchery, rioting. By the middle of the 19th century that perceived threat had been translated into widespread resentment.

The public face of that resentment was manifest in the regular demonstrations and parades, declaring the cultural and national superiority of Protestantism, notably the annual Orange Day extravaganza on the Twelfth of July. The orchestrated arrogance of these events was a deliberate taunt to an impoverished and oppressed community who, inevitably, retaliated with counter-demonstrations. The result was a chronic pattern of sectarian violence and riots, to which English Protestant outrage reacted predictably. The Irish community also had to contend with a reactionary and largely Tory-controlled English press. The latter habitually attributed street violence to 'Popery' which had 'so completely [...] debased the physical and moral habits of the Irish peasant that it is

impossible to ameliorate his condition as a social animal...' (*Liverpool Mail*, July 1851, quoted in Neal, 1988, pp. 137,138). The *Mail*, as Neal maintains, 'was articulating an opinion held by many Protestants, that Orange processions and meetings were peaceful affairs and the actions of an alien minority (Irish Catholics) were aimed at restricting Englishmen's liberties' (Ibid, p. 138). However, this prejudice in the popular imagination had an added political dimension, since it was the dominant Conservative party which 'tended to represent the established and native-born section of the population in a city conscious of wave after wave of immigration' (D C Jones quoted in Waller, 1981, p. 18).

The strategy of identifying an alien presence in the midst of an English city, was resorted to whenever the Tory majority was challenged by Liberal or Irish nationalist opposition. Thus, the so-called 'forward-looking' capitalist owners, whilst projecting a modern image of Liverpool relied not only upon out-dated industrial practices but upon an antiquated political and social structure for their prosperity. Throughout the later years of the 19th century those same owners of capital were also prominent figures in the main political parties and were in a unique position to maintain political control of the city, not only through the press, but also through organized bodies of Protestant factions, such as The Working Men's Conservative Association, and its increasingly close ties with the Orange Order. Conservative politicians had to keep their distance from an organisation with a reputation for violent attacks on any expression of Catholic or Irish allegiance, but had no compunction in fomenting anti-Irish feeling at election times when it depended on the Orange vote to maintain its majority on the Council. While declaring for 'Tory Democracy' as a modern response to urban working-class emancipation, they in fact were relying on a residual archaism in the social fabric.[9]

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[9] Democracy in this context is a relative term. A democratic franchise - what has been generally accepted as 'universal adult suffrage' inscribed in the British systems of 'parliamentary' and 'municipal' democracy - was unrealized before 1928 (no women could vote before 1918). Therefore phrases such as 'the vote' must be understood as something confined to property-owning males. The working-class vote was confined to largely artisanal Protestants whose political allegiance was inscribed in terms such as 'Tory Democracy' and organisations such as The Working Men's Conservative Association: part of the Conservative Party's propagandist apparatus in their successful domination of the city over a period of 100 years. The majority of the working class remained unrepresented until 1918.

Sectarian violence grew in intensity during the first decade of the 20th century. With the increased frequency of working-class Protestant militancy, Liverpool Catholics were subjected to a constant barrage of Orange processions, mass demonstrations and public lectures, which were so inflammatory that a leading Protestant fanatic, John Kensit, was killed in a violent incident in October 1902. What followed was a period of frequent demonstrations, beatings, and riots among Irish Nationalist and Protestant working-class groups which was to reach its peak in 1909. The force of communal antagonism was such that parts of the city had become territorial 'no-go' areas: both Protestant and Catholic individuals and families became subject to such extreme forms of intimidation that, in places where they constituted a perceived minority, they were forced to leave their homes or places of work. The legacy of those events informs the structure of place in Hanley's 'Gelton', the fictional Liverpool of his Furys Chronicle, whose first volume is set in 1911. Here the Furys dwell in 'Hatfields', 'a place where most neighbours, except for a sprinkling of families like the Ferrises, were stalwarts of The Prince of Orange'. However, the 'unfortunately placed' Catholics were subjected annually on the Twelfth of July to a demonstration of 'loyalty to Prince William in as blatant and bloody a manner as possible. It was a miniature Vesuvius, for ever spouting lava of a most vicious and filthy kind' (Hanley, 1935a, pp. 442,443).

It is in this atmosphere of street violence and disorder that the Hanley family entered Liverpool, coming to live at No. 21, Othello Street, Kirkdale, an area which was to experience 'the full virulent flood of sectarianism during the 1910 General Election campaign' (Lane, 1987, p. 137) and it is to that moment that it still attributes a fundamental shift in its fortunes. The late Gerald Hanley, James's younger brother, who himself became a fictional chronicler of another kind of colonial experience, used to describe the family's social position as that of 'the first Nigerians'; a phrase that echoes Marx, who 'compared the English proletarians' attitudes towards Irishmen with that of 'poor whites' towards 'niggers' in the American South...'" (quoted in Waller, 1981, p. 18). It is out of such hostility that a community develops those strategies of survival which are the everyday manifestations of an exiled consciousness. Hanley's fundamental allegiance, as in his first novel, is primarily to an embattled community - with all its faults - culturally and temporally at odds with a modern, inimical city, yet it also

recognizes that a unified sense of contemporaneity can arise out of the very disjunct and divided circumstances that modernity itself has created. For a city so much in thrall to a capitalist system which profited by fragmentation and inter-communal strife, organized labour, begun in the latter half of the 19th century was the most likely social force to cut across the lines of conflict and create a unified movement.

In the years leading up to 1911, the progress of organization of both political and industrial labour had been fitful and fragmentary. Even the most modest of socialist or Labour campaigns - for a statutory eight-hour day, relief for the unemployed, free meals in Board Schools, for instance - were met with fierce opposition from Orange counter-agitation which associated Labour with Irish Home Rule and atheism, while industrially, the individual unions were hampered not only by sectarianism, but by fierce employer opposition and the concomitant problems of recruitment (See Waller, 1981, p. 100).[10] Eventually, frustrated by the too gradualist approach of such official workers' organizations as the Liverpool Trades Council which failed to make any real improvements in their appalling conditions,[11] rank-and-file seamen and dockers forced two partly successful strikes (1889 and 1890 respectively). However the fragile settlements which resulted meant that the Employers' Labour Association was still 'strong enough to ban union men, [and] by 1891 most of the old conditions were resumed. The work was still dangerous, the hours were irregular and the union was balked' (Ibid, p. 104).

Meanwhile, since the turn of the century, real wages had consistently been in decline and in the period up to the General Election of 1906, there had been an accompanying increase in prices. Again, frustration with the lack of progress through conventional labour channels gave rise to an alternative and more radical working-class movement in

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[10] Prejudicial though this was, it had a fundamental basis in fact in that militant trade unionism was often inspired largely by Irish activists - both rank and file and leadership. Ben Tillett, Will Thorne, Tom Mann and James Sexton, the most prominent of working-class leaders at this time, were all of Irish descent. Sexton, the founder of the National Union of Dock Labourers was to become Liverpool's first Labour MP.

[11] James Sexton himself had been disfigured by a horrendous industrial accident.

the form of 'syndicalism', inspired by the American Industrial Workers of the World (The Wobblies) and the French *Confédération Générale du Travail*. At the same time, rank-and-file workers in the seamen's and dockers' unions were agitating for improvements after the serious setbacks of the previous century and the recent imposition of new conditions of employment. The International Shipping Federation had refused to employ any members of the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, substituting membership of their own association as a requirement and imposing 'humiliating and disgusting' medical examinations on the men (Mann, 1967, p. 208).

The culmination of that wave of activism was a series of strikes, begun in June 1911, initiated by Liverpool seamen, and then co-ordinated by a syndicalist Transport Workers Federation under Tom Mann, gradually involving the entire Merseyside transport industries - dockers, carters, railway and tramway workers - in the most solid and successful industrial action the port had known. According to Mann, who was chairman of the Strike Committee for the strike's seventy-two days' duration, 'never did so many workers in such varied occupations show such thorough solidarity as on the occasion in Liverpool' and he recorded that 'neither political nor theological opinions were to find advocacy or expression on the committee' (Ibid, pp. 212, 213). The Liverpool Transport Strike was unique in that it was the first industrial action in Britain which relied entirely on inter-union solidarity for its success, as distinct from previous strikes confined to individual trades. However, it was won in the face of formidable opposition from the Government who, alarmed at both a dramatically paralysed city and an action which would begin to assume national significance, ordered in extra police and troops. In an atmosphere of what amounted to virtual martial control, the strike committee planned a mass demonstration for Sunday 13th August. Yet, despite an orderly and disciplined meeting in which one hundred thousand people gave unanimous assent to support the next stage of action, the police flagrantly provoked an incident in order to break up the demonstration. Mann's testimony to a 'brutal butchery' in which defenceless men and women, many of whom were aged, 'were deliberately knocked down by heavy blows from the truncheons of powerful men' was corroborated by newspaper reports united in their condemnation of an official 'display of violence that horrified those who saw it' (*Manchester Guardian* quoted in Ibid, p. 223).

It is this scene of retaliation to a potentially united working class which is central to Hanley's *The Furys*. Its fundamental significance is that it precisely illustrates how Hanley's whole oeuvre emerges out of the communal conflicts and violent social upheavals of Liverpool at a particular historical moment. The Furys novels, of which there were five written over a period of twenty years, are central to Hanley's work since they are representative of how people of diverse orientations act upon and react to the exigencies of social and historical transformation.[12] The responses are often contradictory but are homologous with the non-contemporaneous nature of Liverpool, a city which itself resembles other European nodes of temporal and spatial conflict. As will be argued in Chapter 11, Hanley's primary cultural influences are the novels of Balzac and Dostoevsky, both defined by their positioning at particular historical moments of crisis and transition. Paris and St. Petersburg respectively are crucial to two sets of heterogeneous texts representing the cities as rapidly advancing modern capitals, which are, nevertheless, disadvantaged by materially and ideologically antiquated economic or cultural practices.[13]

In his works Hanley's Liverpool is similarly constituted by Balzacian or Dostoevskian temporal conflicts and, in Bloch's terms, older forms of consciousness - 'older times than the modern ones continue to have an effect in older strata'. It is thus that Liverpool's complex temporal structure reveals itself in Hanley's works - in its associations, on the one hand, with the sea, rural Ireland, ritual Catholicism, older forms of collectivity and, on the other hand, with industry, docklands, trades unionism, youthful dissent, individual

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[12] However, some differences in the fictional setting from the actual Liverpool accounts, such as frequent references to the rôle of the miners, have led some commentators mistakenly to believe it is set during the General Strike of 1926. See, for instance, *The Sunday Dispatch*, 6 2 35, *The Sunday Times*, 3 2 35 and the blurb of the most recent Penguin Twentieth Century Classics edition (1983).

[13] Compare Haussmann's radical transformations of Paris in the 1840s with Peter the Great's extensively 'modernized' St Petersburg begun in 1703. In the case of Balzac, the temporal disjunction was between a modern bourgeois consciousness confirmed by the sequence of revolutions since 1789, and the persistence of *ancien régime* values: with Dostoevsky it was the manifestations of various revolutionary or nihilist tendencies in the younger generation against a residual, yet declining Russian feudal hegemony (See Chapter 10, pp. 152-161).

ambition.

As the thesis will consistently argue, Hanley's writing is determined by a modified modernist paradigm, dependent on a 'differential' modernity, which is determined in turn by a series of conjunctural and transitional moments. In terms of a novelistic response, the latter are represented within what Bakhtin calls the novelistic 'chronotope'. Here the spatial concentration of various expressions of subjective temporality are defined by conscious or unconscious class affiliations (See Chapter 11, pp. 169-172), a set of differential subject positions whose objective effect is to reveal not a single but a complex and overdetermined reality. Such a version of 'modernism' here proposed has implications for Hanley and other writers from the working class, particularly those whose writing has been conventionally represented in terms of a dominant model of 'socialist realism'. Hanley, along with other writers emerging from Britain's industrial provinces - F C Boden, J C Grant, Rhys Davies - was forging a radical modernism out of a new subjectivist impulse within the working class which, in its attention to the squalor and deprivation of that environment, moved beyond the parameters of 'the Real' to more expressive metaphors of a modernist class consciousness. Just like his European predecessors, then, Hanley's work is determined by the subjective experience of social conjunctions within the modern city. Like Paris and Petersburg of the 19th century, Liverpool's identity as the 'second city' of 20th-century Britain was also crucial and transitional, an urban space in which the collective consciousness of a large proportion of its population was shaped by the older agrarian economic base. For the migrant sensibility, the experience of the city was that it was both familiar in its patrician social relations and unfamiliar in its bewildering pervasive modernity.

In The Furys Chronicle and other novels of Liverpool, dockers, unemployed workers, cleaners, housewives, railwaymen, merchant seamen, constitute a diverse yet nonetheless cohesive community living in tolerant proximity. Orange and green, while potentially divisive, are emblematic of old allegiances, not fundamental human difference. Even sectarian abuse in which an Orangeman customarily refers to Irishmen as '[f]resh stuff. Irish closets', who are '[all] born in - [shit]' has a comic or ironic rather than a malicious

effect (Hanley, 1944, pp. 218, 219).[14] Collectively, the community clamours - like Desmond Fury the ambitious trade-unionist - for recognition and emancipation, to extend and consolidate the gains of working-class men and women against the 'Capitalists [who] would have driven [them] into the gutter.' Yet, individually, they also, like his Protestant neighbour, George Postlethwaite, 'claim the right to be left in peace - to be dirty, to have some different kinds of pox, to be left alone...' (Hanley, 1935a p. 248). The city's workers and seamen are, then, both solidly behind the miners, recognizing the historical example of their struggle - their 'always being shit on' - but also, like Denny Fury, a veteran ex-seaman, secretly in fear of the disruption to their conventionally ordered lives (Ibid, pp. 192, 220). Just as the carter George Postlethwaite escapes into the placid pre-industrial world of the stable, and the comfort of the natural domain of animals, so Denny Fury longs for his sailor's life, which, although recently mechanized, still enables those treasured moments of tranquillity which only the natural environment of the sea can provide. Such representations of private or secret motivations are testimony to those co-existent sensibilities associated with older forms of consciousness, and are a conscious refusal to privilege the contemporaneous narratives of the conventional 1930s socialist novel, focusing instead on the recognition of modernity's spatial and temporal disjunctions. Whilst there is an implicit unity in the representation of collective struggle, his characters continue to be divided, both amongst themselves in the context of the family or the workplace, and within themselves as people of contradictory motivations.

Modernity, then, forces people into defensive strategies yet also affords opportunity, goads people to ambitious projects, to rebellion, to personal transformation. A more conventional modernist character is the younger son, Peter who, in his simultaneous engagement in, and detachment from, the strike and his essential transgression of all moral codes - familial, communal, religious and sexual - has, from a subjective viewpoint, social consequences as far reaching as any contemporary social or political movement. Yet the most conspicuous representatives of a spatio-temporal conflict and

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[14] The obvious word missing here has been restored in parenthesis. Hanley was often constrained by his publishers to censor his own work, for which, especially in the case of his first publisher, Eric Partridge, he was bitterly resentful (See Part III, Chapter 8, pp. 120-123)

conjunction are Hanley's women. The matriarchal line of the Mangan family - Fanny Fury and her sister Brigid - together with the network of their friends and acquaintances such as Miss Pettigrew and Joseph Killkey, is collectively symbolic of an older pre-industrial Irish religious hegemony, which maintains its sway through the ideological apparatus of the Catholic church. Their world is not so much Liverpool, but the Cork of an older established social order: nevertheless there is an implicit rejection of that world in the rebellious younger generation comprising Maureen Fury, who longs for the trappings of prosperity, and Desmond's wife, Sheila, whose dual identity is determined by her Anglo-Irish aristocratic lineage and her secret life amongst the dockside underworld.

Thus the private motivations and ambitions of the individual characters are simultaneously inspirited and threatened in Hanley's industrial novels by the contingent factor of mass human activity. There is a clear recognition of the necessity for direct action and the transformative power of a united working class, yet Hanley's narrative displays a consistent discomfort with demonstrations of mass feeling, of public indignation, and this is nowhere more evident than in the representation of the event in Liverpool's history which has become known as 'Bloody Sunday'. In Hanley's demonstration scenes, he is quick to establish the relentless dehumanizing effect of crowds, whatever might be the justification for their formation. Thus, despite the textual indictment of a police force, indiscriminately crashing batons down upon human heads, Hanley has other priorities:

> [The baton's] song had assumed control. It had taken the place of hooter and whistle, of all the concourse of sounds that came from the industrial ant-heap. Trains, trams, ships, docks, cars, machines were silent. On this Sunday afternoon there was only the yelling mob, the red-faced and sweating police, and the stiff wooden interrogator that sang ceaselessly through the air. (Ibid, p. 276)

Here, the baton is representative, not so much of a material, politically specific brutality, but of some universal, socially undifferentiated hypostatized 'power', an inevitable emanation from the forces of industrialization. It is that 'expressionist' structure of feeling which powerfully expresses a modern reified consciousness, but it also threatens to

suppress the political effects of that material act against which the working class might present a united front.

The multiple or 'polyphonic' textual layering of *The Furys*[15] has been described by Patrick Williams as the 'problem of commitment' in Hanley's non-specific politics, yet, as he finally decides, this should not preclude a sympathetically committed political interpretation (See Williams, 1990, pp. 92-99). Hanley's text is not so much an express act of political allegiance - as Ralph Wright, says of Hanley, 'he allows not one scrap of direct propaganda to invade his novels' - but an articulation of a contradictory and complex class experience, since Hanley's strength is that 'he understands the men and women who will make the next revolution'.[16] The significance of *The Furys*, then - written during 1934 - is not only the moment of its conception but that of its object. The latter - the early years of the Hanley family's first encounters with modern Liverpool - represented a crisis point in the city's history: the very peak of sectarian violence, and of industrial militancy. The potential of that moment was to sunder the political and communal deadlock and establish from the centre of Liverpool a new unified time consciousness in the projection of a Utopian future, moving beyond the constraints of both modernity and its temporal other. Yet Hanley's fictional response is both to affirm the political and social transformations of the modern world and to resist or escape its otherwise demoralizing or dehumanizing effects. In this respect, Hanley's project is guided by an impulse to emancipate the working class, to show its members as people of complex, sophisticated and progressive motivations, yet it can often retreat into a longing for a pre-modern form of consciousness, untrammelled by the perplexing tribulations of modernity, and entirely repudiate the contemporary world altogether. This will now be shown to be the case in Hanley's engagement with the sea, to which his response is similarly contradictory: on the one hand, bringing to the sea a decidedly modern set of values in a decidedly 20th-century mode of representation, while on the other hand, conserving the sea within a 'cluster' of its more traditional associations, as the place of the imagination, of contemplation and retreat.

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[15] See Part III, Chapter 11, pp. 162-179.

[16] Ralph Wright's review in *The Daily Worker*, December 1935.

PART II JAMES HANLEY AND THE SEA: ROMANCE AND REALITY

CHAPTER 2. A WRITER OF THE SEA

A cursory glance through James Hanley's oeuvre reveals that, virtually unique among those working-class writers who emerged in the 1930s, he is, above all, a writer of the sea. Ostensibly, he shares with George Garrett, James Phelan, John Sommerfield, Dave Marlowe a common contemporary experience of the sea as an available release from the oppressiveness of the urban environment:

> Going to sea was a particularly accessible and resonant metaphor for the dislocating pressures of working-class experience - as well as being a traditional, though increasingly difficult alternative to employment... (Croft, 1990, p. 175)

However, despite the 'pressures' on the young Hanley of his transportation to Liverpool, this chapter will argue that his reasons for going to sea were infinitely more complex and deeply felt and that Hanley, like no other English writer of **any** class, continues to be pre-occupied with the sea throughout his long writing career.

As such, Hanley is a successor to Conrad, but in a fundamentally problematic sense. The latter was writing out of a youthful experience of sailing ships, and although, by the time he began to write, maritime industrialization was virtually complete, he remained ideologically fixed within an imperialist late romanticism. Hanley's project was to recapture for his class a narrative version of the sea which, against the dominant Conradian paradigm, explores the realities of a working environment whose popular image still extant among the reading public was that of its nobility of venture and calling. Hanley challenges that residual romantic conception and brings the sea resolutely into the twentieth century, particularly through his representations of modern warfare. Yet the sea continues to exercise a symbolic power which can override the most determined of realist projects. Part II will further argue the problems of representation in Hanley: just as Liverpool embodied the contradictions of capitalist modernity, the sea itself, as represented in Hanley, was not without its ambiguities. Hanley's early stories are

concerned with the sea as primarily an industrial medium imposing the harshest workplace conditions. Yet even that conscious representation of the contemporary sea experience continues to evoke those maritime associations which more readily invoke a latent romanticism. Then there is the additional problem of two kinds of modernist interpretation: the sea as a metaphor for industrial displacement, or equally as a site of the individual human, and often tragic struggle for existence, independent of any social or political determinations.

This section will trace the origins in Hanley's work of several co-existent strains, which are subject to both traditional and modern influences. Because of Hanley's particular ancestry, the former derives from a persistent familial and cultural identification, whereas the latter is the result of an actual experience which contradicts but does not quite displace that original conception. The argument will therefore consist in a comparison of those elements which determined Hanley's formation as a writer of the sea: on the one hand the cultural factors which together inform an **idea** of the sea, and on the other, a conception of the **reality** of the sea as produced by a series of contemporary experiences.

The Sea as Idea

According to Hanley's own account, the formation of his idea of the sea can be traced to his earliest memories. In the first chapter of *Broken Water*, called 'Soundings',[17] Hanley recalls a family outing to the Hill of Howth, the promontory familiar from the Dublin of James Joyce's works. At a given moment the child - he must have been about seven or eight years old - breaks away from the family group and rushes to the top of the hill, where he is 'free at last' to indulge his romantic longings: 'to lie down on my back and stare up at the sky at the wheeling sea-gulls, but most of all to think of this sea [...] to enjoy it alone, sharing with none':

> I exhilarated in the sheer smell of the sea, a strange deep delicious smell like no other on earth. (Hanley, 1937a, pp. 21,22,23)

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[17] All the chapters of his 'autobiographical excursion' are given names with maritime associations, e.g. 'A Capful of Wind', 'By the Head', 'Living Water' etc.

However, both in the same volume and in letters and conversations he quite candidly asserts that he could 'never remember being a child' (Ibid, p. 27). In response to a letter from Henry Green in 1933 he had already written:

> I do not think there is one fragment of my past worth recalling for the simple reason that I cannot remember a single day of my boyhood - or youth. [...] When I went away to sea at the age of 13 I in fact became a man. Now I am 32 years old, I have seen everything good and everything bad. Beastly rotten things, kind things, beautiful things. It was an education for me. (Hanley/Green, 16 11 33)

First to deny childhood and then to go on to record its significant moments would appear disingenuous. However, both instances are indicative of Hanley's struggle to find an appropriate response to the contradictory conditions of his formation.

The suppression of childhood and the substitution of what in psychological terms is a 'screen memory', is attributable to the discernible tensions in the Hanley family - particularly over Edward Hanley's decision to go to sea - despite the evident autobiographical nostalgia for a pre-lapsarian Dublin childhood. Hanley, in sympathy with his father, is drawn to an idea of the sea-going life which relies for its expression on what W H Auden calls 'the romantic iconography of the sea'. Here, the symbolic sea forms the 'nucleus of a cluster of traditional associations', not the least of which is the romantic need to escape into solitude from the negative effects of the nurturing environment (Auden, 1985 p. 22). Such a desire is produced out of what Auden identifies as the 'disappearance of the true community', one of the major effects of rapid industrialization and urban expansion which offers to humanity two alternative directions for the future: '<u>either</u> personal choice and through the sum of such choices an actual community <u>or</u> the annihilation of personality and the dissolution of community into crowds' (Ibid, pp. 35,36). The dual threat of annihilation and dissolution became a reality with the Hanleys' enforced migration to the modern urban nightmare of Liverpool. Hanley, in Auden's terms, had already intuited that loss, of which his family's antagonisms were a symptom, and the subsequent personal 'choice' represents an escape from the shock of city modernity in pursuit of the romantic community of the sea.

Hanley's claims to have had no boyhood memories are, therefore, a defensive repression of those painful aspects of his early life which might collectively be named the trauma of modernity. Such a conception recognizes the significance not only of psycho-pathological processes but also of the economic necessity of child labour which has tended to preclude a sufficient experience of childhood from so many working-class lives. Those rare moments of childhood memory, however, represent a repudiation of modernity, evoking a pre-industrial longing for rural Ireland and the sea. Hanley's alternate evocations and denials are evidence of a dual response which in aesthetic terms translates as the moment of conjunction of two opposing world-views: on the one hand a residual romanticism and on the other an emergent modernism. His reaction to the impact of modernity - 'I cannot remember my boyhood' - finds its aesthetic counterpart in his early works in which a putative childhood is invaded and overwhelmed by the demands of an industrialized, adult and masculinized world. However, the alternative response - 'I exhilarated in the sheer smell of the sea' - concurrently generates a different kind of writing, a Utopian longing which seeks compensation for the traumatic effects of reification and mechanization.

By the age of ten, the boy James had already become disaffected from his new environment, forsaking the normality of conventional childhood relations for the precocious world of English literature. Discovered to be making clandestine visits to the public library, he was publicly admonished by the teacher for 'reading books' unsuitable for a child his age and for his lack of interest in boys' games (Hanley, 1937a, p. 36). Hanley's youthful misdemeanour, which he could not admit even to his parents, was to become addicted to the mannered 18th-century prose of 'Mr Addison and Mr Steele'. It is not known why he was attracted to such writing, but Addison's essay on the sea in the *Spectator* of 1712 must have made an impression since, as Jonathan Raban argues, it is 'a major landmark in sea writing [which] identifies the sea as the archetype of the Sublime in nature...':

> Addison's eighteenth-century sublime sea is the immediate ancestor of the modern romantic sea. Suddenly, the water itself is the focus and in the foreground of the picture. Where in Charles Cotton's poem, 'The Tempest', a vividly rendered storm at sea had been created as an emblem of the turbulent and ungovernable emotions of the human heart, in Addison the sea is a sufficient subject in its own right. The sensation of 'agreeable

> horrour' provoked by the sight of great waves is one that will reverberate through the writing of the next three centuries. (Raban, 1993, p. 8)

Raban (though he never mentions Hanley), in tracing the changing historical conceptions of the sea, parallels Hanley's own varied and contradictory influences. From the notion of the sea representing a natural sublimity in the 18th century, the account moves on to the still persistent romanticism alluded to in Auden. That idea begins in the age of Byron, Coleridge and Turner (his seascapes), who establish the sea, through its associations with freedom and indomitability, as a formidable symbol of radical and revolutionary impulses. The most significant inheritor of the symbolic method, though not emphasized by Raban, is, according to Auden, Melville and the great novel of the sea, *Moby-Dick*. With the advent of Conrad, the romantic iconography of the sea mutates into an altogether different symbolic code, where it is consistently invoked, no longer in the spirit of revolutionary freedom, but defensively as a refuge from the land-based expansion of new democratic processes. Just as the sea was the last 'natural' place on earth unpolluted by the encroachments of industrialization, so the sailing ship was the remaining social space where a 'natural' order of human relations - depending on the pyramidal paradigm of captain, officers and seamen - could still exist.

However, in omitting Hanley, Raban also elides the realist contribution to sea-writing, which is Hanley's widely recognized strength. The strategy in the early novels and stories is on one level a realist rejection of Conrad's late romanticism. This is not to devalue the latter's influence in the movement loosely referred to as modernism: his technical innovations confirm his placing within that literary framework. However it is the dominating aesthetic and ideology - the refusal of and escape from the modern world, which is often the attendant paradox of that movement - that prompts Hanley's rejection. His direct engagement with modernity marks him out from his maritime antecedents, primarily because it is able to separate the sea's aesthetic associations from what is ostensibly an actual shipboard experience. Yet Hanley is also a modernist: his spiritual confederates are not only those English working-class writers of the 1930s but also the expressionist Americans such as O'Neill and B Traven. Even then, Hanley's eclectic interests also enable him to express an admiration for those latter-day writers who are the

direct inheritors of a Conradian world-view - notably H M Tomlinson and Richard Hughes - and this is indicative of his complex attitude: a persistent awe of the sea, going back to the 18th century, through the romanticism of his spiritual mentor, Melville, to an active and conscious challenge to, but sometimes unwitting collusion in Conrad's patrician conservatism. However, to begin to unravel the complexity of Hanley's formation, it is also necessary to identify the moment of his entry into the Merchant Service and his own sense of reality of the sea.

The Sea as Reality

The reality of the sea began for Hanley when he was still a child in 1914, just before the outbreak of the First World War. By that time, the Merchant Service had been largely mechanized: sail was now only used by small coastal craft and the still surviving Asiatic fleet of tea clippers. Sailing ships had been in decline since before Conrad's time and in a very short period industrialization had transformed the shipping trade. In 1860, when the railways had overtaken stage and mail coaches, steamships still 'lagged behind sailing vessels by some fifty thousand tons', but by 1869, after the opening of the Suez Canal, 'the tonnage of steamships leaving the shipyards was five times greater than that of sailing vessels' (Strong, 1956, p. 4). However, the conditions aboard merchant vessels had changed little since the time of Napoleon. Continual complaints from crewmen to the emergent Sailors and Fireman's Union included poor food, cramped and insanitary quarters, long hours, inadequate and irregular pay, and disease. The history of labour relations aboard ship had been one of continual antagonism between men and officers who, encouraged by the owners' dictate of profit at any cost, habitually exploited the vulnerability of the men, to such an extent that desertion had become common and systemic.[18] At the end of the 19th century, captains were still forcing men to 'desert' at the port of destination, a practice which was tacitly encouraged by British owners in order to avoid unnecessary labour costs while in dock (see Home, 1922, p. 6).

It was as late as 1894, when the Sailors and Firemen's Union began to campaign, that

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[18] Hanley, himself 'jumped ship' at St John, New Brunswick to avoid the tedium of troopship voyages, only to end up in the Canadian Army and active service in the trenches of France (Hanley, 1937a, p. 208).

some improvements were begun, though these were hampered by institutional intransigence, endemic shipboard conservatism and structural legacies from the days of sail. For example, the positioning of the crews quarters - the fo'c'sle (forecastle) - up in the bows, where the ship was most open to the elements, had been a traditional expedient of sailing vessel design. However, with the advent of steam-driven ships, the opportunity to alter radically the allocation of space was not taken and the wedge-shaped fo'c'sle continued to be incorporated into the design of merchant vessels as late as the 1920s. Such was Hanley's experience on most of his voyages. By 1906, the first Merchant Shipping Act was passed, but consisted of a handful of rudimentary measures which were easily circumvented by the still reluctant owners.[19] The planned, more comprehensive second half of the Bill, introduced by James Sexton, was inexplicably delayed and did not receive its first reading until 1921: it was not until the Second World War that, as an emergency measure, the owners were finally made to provide continuous pay both afloat and ashore with the necessary regularization of 'allotments' to dependents (see Course, 1963, p. 282).[20]

This brief history gives an idea of the kind of conditions and draconian rules under which the average merchant seaman was forced to work, and much of this informs the more conventionally realist forms of representation in Hanley's fiction. The consistent image in the novels and stories is of the seaman's stoical resignation and instinctive courage in the face of both the implacable 'natural' hazards of the sea and the arbitrary controls and regulations of officialdom. With the advent of the First World War, the seaman's habitual altruism proved invaluable, but it was also a time when ordinary seamen were becoming increasingly resentful of, and resistant to, the arbitrary imposition of wartime regulations. Hanley's fiction often betrays an anti-militarism and an atavistic bitterness which harks back to the days of the Press Gang. From a critical realist

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[19] One of the more scandalous revelations to emerge from the *Titanic* disaster (1912) was the fact that the crew's wages were terminated the moment the ship was sunk; this practice continued throughout the First World War.

[20] Hanley's fictional testimony is supported by W E Home's more disinterested opinion, which expresses his 'great regard for seamen [who] generously stand up to any duty that comes along without hesitation, even if it means risk to themselves; and they know they must, in a crisis, act decisively, and at once' (Home, 1921, p. 10).

perspective, there is an evident anger directed toward the military and institutional absurdities, while, on the other hand, his more naturalist or sometimes expressionist mode suggests a countervailing stoicism which accepts the inevitability of those events as the logical consequences of what is naturally human. One of the principal questions raised, then, is whether Hanley's fictions of the sea are to be read as radical statements about the historical, social and political nature of the mercantile marine - in peace and wartime - in terms of its specific human effects; or whether those considerations are ultimately subordinated to an overriding aesthetic which foregrounds the 'essentially' tragic as an unchanging and dominating component of the human condition.

CHAPTER 3. REALISM AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

It is reasonable to expect that the idea of the sea would be inscribed in those forms of representation which primarily rely on the imagination; whereas that of the reality would be discovered in the more readily available forms of working-class representation, that is in autobiography and letters. Yet Hanley consistently upsets these expectations. By 1937, he had made a reputation as a creator of powerful and disturbing images and, because he was a sailor who wrote about the sea, those images were assumed by many reviewers to derive directly from personal experience.[21] If this was a realism then it was one which, in the manner associated with Zola, transformed 'ordinary, contemporary, everyday reality', by focusing attention on what was 'startling', sordid, and violent: a form which was 'in part a revolt against the ordinary bourgeois view of the world... a further selection of ordinary material which the majority of bourgeois artists preferred to ignore' (Williams, 1962, p. 275). It was to Zola's model of 'bourgeois dissidence' that 20th-century working-class writers such as Hanley were inevitably drawn. Yet Hanley's commitment to 'the Real' can be read in another way, namely as part of a developing 'autobiographical tradition' within working-class writing (Worpole, 1982, p. 91). Here, the traditional distinctions between autobiography and fiction are much less rigid. What is of greater importance is that realist representations of working-class experience are creating a political opposition to a dominant bourgeois culture which inevitably privileges 'the great and important' as the privileged auto/biographical subject' (Stanley, 1992, pp. 8,9). Hanley's first writing of any committed length was 'A Soldier's Journal of the War' kept while he was in the trenches, but which he was deterred from publishing by 'a Mr. Robert Glanville of London, [who] kindly advised me to burn it, not as rubbish, [...] but because he thought it went a bit too far as a picture of the war' (Hanley, 1937a p. 248). The loss is deplorable, since there is a dearth of working-class accounts both of trench

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[21] For a discussion of Hanley's reputation in the 1930s see Durix, 1979, pp. 9-21, see also Kate O'Brien on Hanley's sea: 'It is what he knows. He knows it technically, in terms of bridge, engine-room, look-out and focsle head; he knows it [...] realistically, in terms of agents' offices, pay-books, and waiting wives and children' (quoted in Stokes, 1964, p. 17), and the review of *The Furys* by Ralph Bates who, himself once a docker and railwayman was able 'to test Mr Hanley's realism by the touchstone of experience' (Bates, R, 1935).

and sea warfare; the writing of a merchant seaman is therefore of particular value, since most records are either official government-sanctioned war documents or those of officers.[22]

The Glanville recommendation is characteristic both of the ways in which literary value is constructed and consolidated through the publishing profession and of how working-class writers are directed and subtly socialized into the values of the middle class.[23] Hanley's writing is clearly subject to the attractions and pressures of the latter, yet, at the same time struggles to adhere to the priorities of its own class. This contradiction has its roots in the development of class consciousness in working-class children, which develops out of an experience of **exclusion**. Part I has already dealt with this experience in relation to Irish migrants, but it is also an unrecognized yet common factor of class:

> ... if we do allow an unconscious life to working-class children, then we can perhaps see the first loss, the earliest exclusion (known most familiarly to us as the oedipal crisis) brought forward later and articulated through an adult experience of class and class relations. (Steedman, 1986, p. 14)

Steedman supports her argument by referring to some studies made of the development of that consciousness in working-class males in America, many of whom, like Hanley, had childhood experiences of enforced removal from rural or older European cultures to modern city cultures. Images that emerge in interviews with the working-class male :

> ... fuse material deprivation with chaotic, arbitrary, and unpredictable behaviour; he sees poverty, in other words as depriving men of the capacity to act rationally, to exercise self-control. A poor man, therefore **has** to want upward mobility in order to establish dignity in his own life, and dignity means, specifically moving towards a position in which he deals with the world in some controlled, emotionally restrained way. (Sennett & Cobb, 1977, p. 22)

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[22] See, for example, Hurd, A.S., 1921; Cornford, L Cope, 1918; and a personal account of his exploits written by Conrad's friend, Captain David Bone (Bone, 1955). As for trench warfare a notable exception is Laurence Housman's collection, although that too is dominated by officers (Housman, 1930).

[23] See Part III, Chapter 9, pp. 124-136

That dignity often only seems to be available through aspiration toward another class. where the privileges of 'high culture' afford the possibility of transcendence of the 'powerlessness' often felt by members of the working class (Ibid, p. 23).

Thus, Hanley's so-called 'factual' accounts continually reproduce a reality, which, in comparison with his fiction and in contradistinction to that of other working-class autobiographies, seems precisely 'controlled and emotionally restrained', emphasizing the inspirational and aesthetic determinants of his formation, while diminishing the significance of those which were more distressing. In common with other memoirs of ex-seamen, *Broken Water* - Hanley's 'autobiographical fragment' - depends upon the central metaphor of the voyage which, in the manner of a fictional account, orders the chaos and randomness of experience into a narrative trajectory representing the final overcoming of adversity.[24] It is a convention of such narratives that the sea provides a means of initial escape from an oppressive childhood on land, yet an examination of seaport communities reveals a more complex set of motivations. Certainly the commonplace of escape, obscures a whole range of causes for youthful maritime ambitions which include local tradition, and the whole fascinating ambience of seaports. Tony Lane attributes Liverpool's long tradition of sea-going to the inspirational nature of the port itself and to the powerful influence of family and community.[25] Liverpool seamen, like Hanley, trace their desire for a sea-going life to 'as far back as I can remember' from which time they were thoroughly immersed in 'the idea of travel' and 'sea-talk':

> In those days most of the people I lived by were seamen. I was brought up with ships or something to do with ships - the docks. [...] The Pierhead in Liverpool was my playground. There used to be a line of ships which you could see looking out of our window [...] Most of my 'education' was on ships. By the time I was twelve I knew every shipping company by the colour of their funnels [...] It wasn't the idea of travel - I just thought it was a man's job. (Lane, 1987, pp. 97,98)

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[24] For a discussion of the close association between fictional and autobiographical method see Stanley, 1992. and Freeman, 1993.

[25] Lane cites Caradog Jones's evidence in *The Social Survey of Merseyside*, 1934 that 'seamen's sons' were more likely to follow the example of their fathers than those of any other occupational group (quoted in Lane, 1987, p. 98).

This image of continuity and tradition echoes both the expression of longing in the younger Hanley and the family's pride in their sea associations. Yet other working-class autobiographical accounts refer to less inspirational reasons for the eventual breakaway. Kenneth MacKenzie, writing of his early years in Glasgow, suggests that it was precipitated by the break-up of the family home after the death of his mother - 'too many kids, too much washing and worry and lack of proper food' - and his disaffection from a 'pious' Salvationist father. MacKenzie spent most of the First World War in Mossbank Reformatory, having in some measure fulfilled his family's expectations that he would 'come to a bad end'. Yet upon his release, even though 'everybody said the sea was a dog's life', everything about the family environment 'intensified [his] longing to get away from home' and he was 'down around the docks looking for a ship' at every opportunity (MacKenzie, 1935, pp. 14,15).

Similarly, the under-age Lennox Kerr joined the Wartime R.N.V.R. in defiance of his mother, whom he had blamed for the disintegration of the family home. For him it was 'the shameful affair which I wanted to ignore' of his mother's infidelity and the belief that 'every one saw this disgrace in my history' (Kerr, 1940, p. 9). Even in more stable environments, the decision often involved a painful parental compromise between the ties of familial love and the imperatives of economic necessity: circumstances of poverty and overcrowding would have been greatly relieved by the absence of one more mouth, together with the benefit of the additional income. Pat O'Mara's mother was initially 'crestfallen. She had seen too much in our home of what usually happens to sailormen' but was eventually persuaded that the seaman's life was both healthier - he had recently returned from a month's confinement to a sanatorium - and more lucrative since as well as 'make us rich [it would] give me a real profession [...] The opportunity opened up by the regular merchant sailormen being called to the Navy or the Army might never come again!' (O'Mara, 1934, pp. 142,143).[26]

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[26] O'Mara, Mackenzie and Hanley all report the ease with which they got their first berths. Although they give different reasons, it was largely due to the constant shortfall in crew numbers: the average length of sea service for a crewman, due to death, accident or satiety was 10 years which required that 5000 boys were needed annually to replace the adult wastage of 10% (See Course, 1963, p. 276).

Hanley, however, was often equivocal over the matter of motivation. Ostensibly his emphasis was on the inspiration of family tradition and personal longing, rather than on the notion of escape, yet this was compromised by the fact that the sea was a major source of family contention, as well as inspiration. Edward Hanley, although secretly proud of his wife's ancestry, was openly and bitterly resentful of anything to do with her family's long association with the 'Senior Service', whose members, he complained, were all 'spit and polish men [...] old wash-women. Too much damned saluting for my liking' (Ibid, p. 48). Yet Edward Hanley's pride in his own calling did not extend to encouraging his son's ambitions. James's determination to go to sea was, in fact, opposed by his father but supported by his mother. The former repeated the proverbial complaint that 'it's only a dog's life anyhow' and feared that the common desire of his children for a sea-going life would lead to the family's disintegration. Nonetheless it was Hanley's mother's sense of pride and tradition which prevailed:

> 'Well and suppose the others did want to go? Let them all go. All my people were sailors, and it never did them any harm.' (Hanley, 1937a, p. 39)

As it transpired, Edward's fears proved to be well founded, since by 1920, all except Hanley's sister Margaret and brother Gerald had gone to sea or left the family home.[27] It was clearly a source of family tension as witness a parallel situation in Hanley's The Furys novels in which the father, Denny, has a similar fear. Here, the break-up of the formerly stable family is constantly attributed, by its various members, to the intractable ambition of Fanny, the mother, to which accusations she reacts with bewilderment and dismay. In actuality it was often women who became the scapegoats for the antagonisms in seaport families: it was them, as Tony Lane perceptively argues, upon whom 'the organisation and management of **survival** depended since 'teenage boys and men, for their part, could escape to the ships' (Lane, 1987, p. 97 - emphasis added). In *The Furys*, it is Fanny who most acutely suffers the burdens of poverty, a factor which is significantly absent in *Broken Water* as are the allusions to the social alienation of the

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[27] His elder brother, Joe, was killed in the Trenches; another sister succumbed to the flu epidemic of 1919.

Irish in sectarian Liverpool.[28] Despite, therefore, a consistent refusal of the idea of the sea as a refuge, and an implicit refutation of the romantic idea that disaffected youth always 'runs away' to sea, there is clearly a feeling of desperation behind the controlling restraint of Hanley's autobiographical narrative, and the familial tension is released as soon as the young Hanley achieves his objective: the day when he could 'say goodbye to all and be free at last' (Hanley, 1937a, p. 48).[29]

Broken Water, then, becomes not so much a history of struggle (as with Kerr, MacKenzie, or O'Mara) as the development of a sensibility, where the sea is that sublime element which determines, overwhelms and transforms. Climbing to the crow's nest is

> ... like making a long pilgrimage to do homage to the gods. It's the sense of height, the perfect peace up above. One's head is so very near the clouds, one's eyes can measure immensities in a single stride. Immeasurable distances, wildernesses of ocean [...] looking down from the heights [the sea] takes on a different meaning and stature, even a different feel. It's a spiritual feeling. It was so easy to see these things in Roger's face. His look was so calm, yet so intense, it had that knowledgeable air which only is seen in the faces of sailors. Yet when the ship docked and this man went home, he was just an ordinary man with no especial qualities to distinguish him from his fellow men in the street. It's as though the touch of solid earth under his feet disarms him. The poise, that tranquillity is gone. (Ibid, pp. 115,116)

The sea-life of the young Hanley is punctuated by many such revelatory, epiphanic passages. Here, the sordid, the painful, the dehumanizing quotidian details of an ordinary seaman's progress are subordinated to the extraordinary, the exceptional moments which conform to an idea of the literary, and the account becomes a selective series of significant encounters with seamen and subsequent musings on events. That tendency makes Hanley's life exceptional indeed when compared to that of his contemporaries, who are more concerned with the realities of struggle and conflict. Compare, for instance,

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[28] This is despite the family's desperate poverty as described by Gerald Hanley and James's occasional private references to it in later life (See Part I, p. 18 and Hanley, L, interviews and conversations)

[29] Hanley's conscious efforts to write against the grain were not sufficient to dispel the myth: see for instance *The Times* obituary, 12 11 85 and Burgess, 1990, both of which describe Hanley as having 'run away to sea'.

Kerr:

> A man lost his individuality out here in this great rolling tank. He had no threads of contact with the world. He could not visualise himself on this ship, and the land at a certain direction and distance [...] He could only look around him at the water to which there was no frame, and be driven inside the little world of men in the forecastle. So the men became petty and spiteful with each other; like old women whose sap had dried. (Kerr, 1940, p. 101)

Hanley, on the other hand, is keen to dispel the idea that sailors 'do nothing but drink, fight and swear', and his relationships with figures such as Repin, the intellectual Russian mate, or Rogers, who liked *Don Quixote*, were prompted by common literary interests. Sailors, according to Hanley are 'good readers, [who] show wonderful discrimination in their reading' (Hanley, 1937a, p. 170). Kerr, however, who also had artistic leanings, was forced to destroy his literary jottings:

> If my shipmates had found them and read how I described them as having bodies like Greek Gods they would have laughed me out of the ship. Because writing isn't for a working man. It sets him apart. Makes him lonely among his own people... Even reading Shakespeare and the Bible and my *Cobbett's Grammar* put me under suspicion...I had to take up every challenge as soon as it showed: had to swipe a chap's face when I did not want to or boast about my splicing - just to prove reading books was not making me any less a sailor. (Kerr, 1940, p. 102)

Conversely that sense of the exceptional, of the outcast, which is Kerr's primary fear, is represented by Hanley as a strength. The commonality of experience which unites his contemporaries - the shared struggles of early youth, membership of gangs, a sense of belonging which is so strong in Kerr, O'Mara and MacKenzie - is triumphally repudiated in Hanley. What takes its place is a strong conviction that a predilection for isolation, for separateness, is an essential component of a writer's formation. Hanley's cultural ambitions in *Broken Water* are to construct a self-image which distances itself from the body of his fictional work and his reputation for 'the sordid'.[30] Here is a writing which is often opaque, humorous; by turns rhapsodically melancholic, disclosing an unexpected

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[30] See 'Hanley et le Goût du Sordide' (Hanley's taste for the sordid) in Durix, 1979, pp. 8-19.

paradox in which the insistent imperatives of the real are suppressed in pursuit of the idea. Yet there is a tension here: Sennett and Cobb give further evidence of the consequences of class mobility, namely that expressions of individual ability and the struggle for self-emancipation, cause feelings of ambivalence and a sense of class betrayal which in turn give rise to a deep distrust of bourgeois values. It is primarily in Hanley's fiction where such a *ressentiment* is most palpably felt, yet Hanley's expressions of the reality of social relations and his affiliations toward his own class are always in struggle with the countervailing pressures of dominant cultural processes.

CHAPTER 4. MEN IN DARKNESS

If the feeling of restraint in *Broken Water* tends to repress those painful injuries of struggle in favour of constructing an artistic identity, then those injuries return in the relative freedom of Hanley's fictional world. His fiction, by contrast, is very much concerned with the burden of reality, its insistent and often horrific palpability, so much so that the realism itself, paradoxically, is called into question. Hanley's novel of escape was his third book and second published novel, *Boy* (1931). The circumstances of its writing, publication and subsequent prosecution will be explored in Chapter 12; but its significance for the present argument is that its ostensible style and the way it has been read and received, indicate that it is primarily concerned with the **actual** commonplace violence of both home, from which so many slum boys sought an escape, and sea, towards which they were inexorably drawn. According to Burgess, *Boy* is 'a typical expression of [Hanley's] view of the novelist's art. It seems to deny art in being pungent with the horrors of the **real** world' (Burgess, 1990, p. xiii - emphasis added). That *Boy* undoubtedly was written out of a certain kind of experience is confirmed by Hanley's own direct reference to it in a later autobiographical vignette called 'Oddfish', which describes how the inspiration for the novel came from an overheard conversation concerning a real-life incident (Hanley, 1953, pp. 49-53). The story's first sixty or so pages are devoted to establishing the desperately unhappy circumstances of the young Arthur Fearon, whose brutal reality is corroborated by Hanley's contemporaries. Compare O'Mara's autobiography with Hanley's fiction:

> Then, amid fuming and cursing, he crashed it in and charged in amongst us, very drunk and with murder in his eyes. He made straight for me, leering: 'You wouldn't open the door, would you, little maneen, eh?' Then he struck me a hard blow in the mouth, throwing me in a corner... (O'Mara, 1934, pp. 136,137)

> He flung the boy against the wall and commenced to undo his belt... He saw his father approach him. He was just going to shout something when the buckle end of the belt caught him on the back of his neck. He did not shout. Instinctively, his two small hands went to his face to ward off further blows... (Hanley, 1990a, pp. 16,17)

To alleviate the poverty of the home the thirteen-year-old Arthur Fearon is forced to abandon school and educational ambition and, along with many other boys, become a 'scaler' in the docks.[31] Escaping the stinking and humiliating experiences of 'initiation' in the hot and fetid atmosphere of the ship's boilers, he stows away and is eventually signed as Ordinary Seaman on a tramp steamer, only to discover an even more violent world of unrelenting physical and sexual abuse. On board ship Fearon is confronted with the habitual vocabulary of sailors which assigns an ambiguous sexuality to boys. Sexuality becomes the site, the crucial space for the determination of identity, so much so that Arthur becomes convinced that his inchoate manhood is being called into question. The constant allusions to Fearon's ambiguity of gender - 'slender white hands like those of a girl' (p. 77), a "Cissy... who should have stayed at home with [his] mammy" (p. 99) - are compounded by innuendos that refer to heterosexual practices known only to the initiated sailors. The bewildering signifiers of adult sexuality - knowing allusions to masturbation ('using both hands', 'how's your arm?'), or prostitution ("Are you going to see the Madame when you get to Alex?") (p. 107) - and three successive sexual assaults on Fearon by members of the crew, combine to produce in the young boy the realization of his lowly status as an unformed male. Initiation into the dockside world of prostitutes affords him only a brief realization of his 'masculinity' before he contracts syphilis and dies.

As early as August 1932 Hanley was already repudiating the commonplace that homosexuality was endemic aboard ship and again no reference is made to it in the accounts of his own early voyages in *Broken Water*.[32] There are, nevertheless, numerous testimonies to its existence, both covert and explicit, in the vast sea literature. From Melville's oblique references in *Moby Dick* and 'Billy Budd',[33] through Walt Whitman's

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[31] A job in ship's maintenance which involved baling out the stagnant and filthy bilges and scraping the encrusted interiors of the boilers.

[32] Referring to his latest novel, *Captain Bottell*, Hanley declares that 'there is no homosexuality in it [...] I defy anybody to find 2 homos in any 1,000 sailors. They're a healthy lot, mentally and physically' (Hanley/Steele, Aug 1932, No. 76).

[33] See for instance, in the former, the marital metaphors in the relationship between Queequeg and Ishmael and, in the latter, Claggart's repressed sexual desire in his hatred

homoerotic sea imagery in *Leaves of Grass*, to Dana Hilliot's propositioning in Lowry's *Ultramarine*. The quartermaster's belief in not going ashore 'when you can get all you want right here aboard' (Lowry, 1980, p. 39) is confirmed by O'Mara's own experience of a 'friendly' cook who drugged the tea of ship's boys so that they 'became very drowsy and fairly fell into the spare bunk of his room' (O' Mara, 1934, p. 168). The reality is further confirmed by Article 5 of the Merchant Shipping Bill of 1921, which called for penalties to be imposed on captains for 'permitting gross indecency' aboard ship (Course, 1963, p. 280).

However much the fictional version might conform to this pattern, it has been observed that Hanley's book is so replete with logical, temporal and narrative inconsistencies that it calls into question Hanley's 'reputation as a realist' (Mars-Jones, 1990). The main objection is that the time-span of the boy's life-trajectory from leaving school, to scaling, to contracting syphilis on his first voyage is so condensed as to defy credibility. Hanley's customary dismissal of the work in later life as a youthful error, written for quick remuneration, would seem to confirm this. In fact it was no more hastily written than his other works at the time and was extensively revised (See Chapter 9, p. 132, and note 99): it was not haste, but other priorities, at once both aesthetic and political, which determined the condensed structure. The intense concentration of such degrading events into a compressed temporal frame is concerned not so much with the fact of their sordidness as with the effect of rapid maturation; an effect which is so reminiscent of Hanley's own deep sense of regret at a missed childhood. The experiences of Arthur Fearon make him prematurely 'old in the head' (p. 65) - a phrase which is used of young James in *Broken Water* - and it is an environment where, traditionally, 'a boy had to give up thinking he was a boy' (pp. 116,117). What takes precedence here, is an **idea** about the nature of contingent reality and its effects over a normal logic of sequential representation. Just as Hanley felt cheated, so the young Arthur is compelled to:

> ... surrender himself to the habits of men, to the traditions of the sea [...] The more the boy endeavoured to be himself, the more the something that was **alien to his nature** fought against it. This something was a kind of growth, inseparable

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of Billy. (Melville, 1972, p. 148; quoted in Auden, 1985, p. 123)

> from the forces inherent in the waters of oceans that stirred men's blood, held them in thrall and bound them fast. (Ibid p. 121, emphasis added)

Reality, and by extension 'realism', becomes occluded when a conviction about the essential 'nature' of things cancels out a conception of the contingent possibilities of human struggle. Fearon will not prevail because he is pitting his 'nature' against that of the sea.

Such an interpretation might imply the subordination of a political reading, yet Hanley's choice of phraseology - 'the forces inherent in the waters of oceans' - is also a signifier for the social forces which are at work within sea-going communities. His novels often display this ambivalence, juxtaposing a Melvillian aesthetic with a co-existent realism. The final chapter opens with those same forces - translated into a storm - as both symbolic and literal agencies of capital. Here the ship is described as 'merely a hulk and nothing more, a kind of weapon with which an order can squeeze the guts out of labour and extract from it just sufficient to keep the average shareholder from getting really low-spirited...' (Ibid p. 176). It is the kind of analysis which identifies Hanley as a 'proletarian', politically motivated writer and is consistent with the writing in his other concurrent works of the sea. *Men in Darkness*, a collection of stories of which *Boy* was originally intended to be a part, *The Last Voyage*, and *Stoker Haslett, A Tale*, locate seamen of various ages and experience in situations of both personal conflict and physical extremity. Hanley's fictional fo'c'sles, again, closely resemble those in the autobiographical accounts of his fellow seamen, which testify to cliques and intense rivalries among sailors closely confined for long periods. Although there is much evidence of a growing political awareness among seafarers, e.g. the frequency of 'sea lawyers', variously called Soshy (socialist) or Bolshy (Bolshevik), these men tend to be marginal figures without any fundamental influence. Thus, despite MacKenzie's proud rôle in a successful mutiny against bad food, he, Kerr and O'Mara, together with Liam O'Flaherty, naturalize and even justify the different degrees of racist, nationalist and personal violence on board ship in a language which reinforces an imperialist stereotyping of foreigners and

perpetuates the image of the tough, self-sufficient sailor.[34] In the main, these accounts tend to be self-legitimating and fail to submit the antagonisms to any political or social analysis. Only Jim Kerr, a self-professed socialist, in hindsight expresses bitter regret at his involvement in factional violence and petty personal rivalry, which divided the crew along nationalist lines. The pressures are evident in his consequent decision 'never to allow myself to be diverted or influenced by any one [...] never [to] yield to a cause I felt was wrong' but his 'simple exercise in individual ethics' regretfully made him 'an outlaw among my shipmates' (Kerr, 1940, p. 188).

Hanley himself, in the autobiographical writings, shows little evidence of being involved in shipboard rivalry and characteristically takes up the dispassionate observer's stance,[35] yet his fictional representations of intense conflict display a political acuity which, by implication, is quite the equal of Kerr's. This amounts to a realization of the consequences when, ignorant of the real causes of their condition, human beings direct their energies destructively inward, instead of toward the external agencies that currently shape their destiny. Hence Hanley's pre-occupation with darkness, fog, obscurity: the physical hazards against which these men struggle are not only part of the material conditions of working at sea, but are also themselves emblematic of the political forces which preclude the development of self-awareness and a true knowledge of the world. In the collection *Men in Darkness*, the eponymous greaser of the story 'Greaser Anderson' is struggling against the indifferent bureaucracy of the shipping Company which has commended him in a certificate of long service with the words 'We will never forget you'. That Anderson interprets this as a literal promise on which he can rely in times of hardship, illustrates the way in which he has been ideologically interpellated by the institution. Anderson is imprisoned within 'the dark fastnesses of his mind', and along with all the 'men' in these stories, is ignorant of the real social relations which govern their working lives (Hanley, 1931, p. 300). Such a narrative device is indicative of

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[34] See particularly O'Flaherty's use of a 'standard' English to distance himself from other types and races (O'Flaherty, 1930, pp. 157-160).

[35] A notable exception is the short memoir 'Don Quixote Drowned' in which the young Hanley strikes the Chief Steward for throwing his volume of Cervantes into the sea (Hanley, 1953, pp. 11-37).

Hanley's intuition of how it is 'not the consciousness of [these] men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness' (Marx, quoted in Williams, 1978, p. 75).[36]

The events of *The Last Voyage*, although like *Boy*'s, compressed within a narrow timescale, represent the condensation of a lifetime's hard work and suffering. The stoker, Reilly - a character modelled on Hanley's own father - is in fear of the approaching end of his working-life (Hanley/Walpole, 11 11 1931). Like Fearon he is at the mercy of the same kinds of insult: 'did he kiss you behind the boiler [...] he went down to kiss the second's - [...] his fifth rib's like a lady's'(Hanley, 1937c, p. 41), yet the beginnings of Reilly's demise are attributed to the occasions when shipping companies' profits come before the men's welfare. Reilly was one of those who had 'no thought for himself then, only for the ship that had to be in New York by Wednesday, ten fifteen p.m':

> Company were anxious to get passengers for Advertisers' Convention in England before Red Star liner got them. Remembered that... Remembered that. Had the rum. Forgot all about strain on body. Six years later the rupture came. (Ibid, p. 59)

The omission of articles and pronouns (demonstrating the early influence of Henry Green) sets up a rhythmic pulse, an accelerating madness, culminating in Reilly's self-immolation in the flames of the ship's boilers. The concentrated narrative rush towards a devastating closure creates an intensity which goes beyond the realist paradigm, yet the stories retain their function of articulating a political reality. A similar kind of industrial delirium infects the stories of two fellow seamen whose writing Hanley knew but personally never met - the Irishman, Liam O'Flaherty, whom Hanley admired (Hanley/Steele, 12 6 31, No. 29) - and George Garrett, a fellow Liverpudlian and political activist (Worpole, 1983, p. 79). In the former's short story, 'The Fireman's Death', which closely resembles Hanley's *The Last Voyage*, an elderly and ill-used stoker works himself to death with the proud motto, '"Die before your fires rather than let a fellow-worker shed his body's sweat

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[36] See also other uses of the occupational epithet to identify individuals by their social rôles: Stokers Bush, Haslett (ship's firemen), John Muck (roadsweeper) etc.

for you"' (O'Flaherty, 1926, p. 119). The gesture of defiance with the words 'I'm a Glasgow fireman and I never give in' might seem futile, absurd, even unreal, yet it is at the very point where 'the madness of conflict' threatens credibility that the text's political force makes itself felt (Ibid, pp. 122, 121).

George Garrett, another ex-seaman, whom Ken Worpole places alongside Hanley and Jim Phelan within an 'expressionist' school of Liverpool seamen writers, also locates his characters in extreme conditions at sea (Worpole, 1980, p. 80). In his short story 'Fishmeal...', the prostrate Costain, lying sick in his bunk amidst the squalor of the fo'c'sle and the squabbling of his shipmates, decides, against strong discouragements, to take his turn in the stokehold, where he quickly becomes delirious, feeling that his face was 'bloated like a monster carnival mask [...] that some horrid unbearable load [...] was crushing down on him all the time, as if his skull had been trapped in the jaws of a monstrous vice that was squeezing his overstrained eyes from their sockets' (Garrett, 1982, p. 3). Garrett, a lifetime socialist, campaigner for the unemployed and member of the International Workers of the World (The Wobblies) is no mere propagandist but, like Hanley, allows the extremes of his Marine Industry stories to speak for themselves. Costain's final quenching plunge into the sea to relieve the agony of his overheated body recalls stories of Hanley's in which a drowning or a final submersion provides the closing image. In *Stoker Haslett* (1932), 'Feud' and 'Narrative' from *Men in Darkness* the conflicts and petty jealousies of shore life, are intensified by the physical confinement of the stokehold and the fo'c'sle. Delirium and madness seem to derive both from thwarted sexual desire and from the physical demands of the job, often exacerbated by conditions of travelling through 'the zone' of enemy submarine action.[37] In *Stoker Haslett* the appearance of the new and aptly named hand, Fury, who happens to be the protagonist's rival and usurper, fuels the flame of Haslett's frustrated passion, so that he literally becomes a man fired, a man whose fire can only be extinguished by the sea. At the same time, the boat itself requires the extra power its firemen can provide in order to make the necessary zig-zag manoeuvres to avoid submarines. The lasting impression is of waste and

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[37] Cf. O'Neill's *In the Zone*, which also concerns shipboard conflicts during wartime (O'Neill, 1988, pp. 124-134).

misspent energy in the futile pursuit of some elusive identity driven by the twin exigencies of war and sexuality. Such an intuition concurs with Jim Kerr's perception that, in time of war, '[m]en want to reassure themselves that they are men. That they are **battling the wrong forces** and retaining an out-of-date ideal is a thought which comes only to a revolutionary' (Kerr, 1940, p. 64, emphasis added).

The *Men in Darkness* stories have that same kind of episodic accumulation of incident and feeling which characterizes *The Last Voyage*. Whereas the latter focuses on the persecution of a veteran sailor, 'Feud' introduces the Melvillian theme of innocence abused. The patent youth and sexual vitality of the 'Billy Budd' figure, Dunfey, enrages the elder Scully and Horrigan. For them, the presence of one so young and 'hardly out of school being signed on to work in a ship's stokehold [...] was the beginning of the end [...], the violent disturbance of the otherwise placid flow of their lives. In effect the coming of Dunfey seemed like a threat' (Hanley, 1931, p. 162). There is no suggestion here of repressed homosexuality. The resentment is rather a manifestation of the older sailors' precarious employment position; their fears that, 'the bond of honour between the company and its older hands... the only security such men as Scully and Horrigan had' was about to be broken (Ibid, p. 163). However, it is not only the fear of unemployment - a loss of the industrial self - which fuels their madness, but also their fear of old age - the loss of the sexual self, for Dunfey is also that recurring image of Oedipus, the usurper, since he has, unknown to Horrigan, just begun a sexual relationship with the latter's daughter. Hanley's stories, however, implicitly warn against a privileging of the psycho-analytic over any political interpretation, since they represent an intuition of those social processes within which there are no such clear-cut distinctions.[38] Again, Hanley's fusion of the twin drives of industry and desire is an articulation of the precarious foundations of masculine identity and the final murder of Dunfey is not only a physical release, but a recognition of failing powers. As Horrigan lets go the body into the sea, what is meant to conceal or engulf becomes instead the Conradian 'mirror', resembling in the light of the moon 'a huge sheet of ice'. As he gazes upon 'the waters to which he

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[38] For an argument against this tendency see Fredric Jameson's reading of Deleuze and Guattari (Jameson, 1989, pp. 21-23).

had yielded up the force and the life' the image itself forces a reflection upon his own plight and stretching his arms out 'as though he were ready to dive down and disappear forever' utters the final valedictory words, '"The sea. The bloody terrible sea,"' (Hanley, 1931, p. 213).

As with *Stoker Haslett*, 'Narrative' is concerned with the emergency ambience of wartime and the way in which this determines a constant tension among the men, intensifying their already existing antagonisms. The stoker, Maugham, and the young trimmer, Brady, are locked in an obsessive battle over the latter's right to associate with the former's sister, a fight which they do not relinquish right up to their last hours adrift in a fog-bound life-boat. As the last bodies disappear beneath the surface, an uncharacteristic clarity pervades the scene:

> "Move your **carcass**, for Jesus's sake, and let's end this bloody game anyhow." With a lunge and a pull he dragged Maugham from the bottom. The water poured in. It filled the boat. It sank. The two bodies bobbed up and down in the water **like well-manipulated marionettes**. Morgan gripped Maugham tightly round the waist. The bodies sank. The waters murmured and the fog was clearing. Wilderness of water. (Hanley, 1931, p. 126, emphases added)

The dispelling of obscurity, the final lucidity produced by the image of the dispersing fog is a homology for a reading experience that is at once a political and an aesthetic illumination, and begs the question as to which is the more privileged discourse. If the sailors are reduced to so much dead matter or are ultimately at the mercy of some grand puppet-master, what is the ultimate cause of that condition, some ineffable force at work in the cosmos, some ultimate determining essence within humanity or something more tangibly political? There remains that ambiguity which the consistent use of the sea as both a framing and a closing device inevitably induces. The final image of a 'wilderness of water', Horrigan's 'terrible bloody sea' is a reminder of other passages:

> The sea. What was the sea? A succubus. A monster. A terrible task-master, a creature of great passions and childish moods. The sea. What was he in comparison? Something insignificant. Nothing at all.
> (Hanley, 1931, p. 167)

and the final words before Reilly's inevitable self-immolation:

> 'All to her. All to the sea.' He gripped his shovel. Then suddenly dropped it. He picked up the steel slice. And suddenly dropped that too. All to her. All his life, hopes, energies. Everything. The flames licked out at him.
> (Hanley, 1937c, p. 80)

Here, again, is that recurring Hanley problem, that blurring and overlapping of two modes of discourse, where political analysis, which implies the possibility of change, is confounded by a countervailing proposition which sees the world in terms of fixed categories, within and against which human beings struggle but are ultimately powerless. The latter derives its persuasive power from a European tradition which identifies the historical persistence of a 'tragic vision' of the world. It is this conceptualization and aesthetic, which embodies the belief, 'at once both historical and absolute [...] that suffering is a vital and energising part of the natural order' (Williams, 1966, p. 45). The sea, within this tradition, is not only a force in itself but embodies an essential implacability in both the natural and the human world. The ambivalence inheres in the way Hanley creates and manipulates images beyond the limitations of 'the Real', at the point where they enter the world of nightmare and symbol. Hanley's sense of a changing 'industrialized' sea might be in many ways modern, but it also retains those terms of reference which are temporally transcendent.

CHAPTER 5. THE SEA AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

If the sea is, on one reading of Hanley, an inexorable force of nature, then the implication is that human beings struggle against it at their peril. Yet it is not always clear in Hanley whether what is being resisted is the sea itself as an elemental force or the sea as a metonymic term for an industry. Whichever it is, the effect is often similar, both having the capacity to mobilize, to drive workers, and at the same time produce in them some fundamental human change. If, as is implied in the *Men in Darkness* stories, it is the sea as an industrial medium which takes precedence, then equally, as the narrative voice declares in *Boy*, 'it was not contact with man that had brought about this sourness' but 'a whim of the sea itself' [which] had twisted something in his nature' (Hanley, 1990a, p. 106). Whichever idea dominates, and clearly it can differ from one story to another, it does not seem to be consonant with Kerr's worker's view 'that man does not command the sea [...] does not cower before it [but] works with the sea'. This was not something Kerr knew 'consciously' but instinctively, ever since his 'first sight of the sea as the place where I was to live and to work'. For him it was 'the sign of a true seaman' (Kerr, 1940, p. 67).

Kerr's pragmatism is essentially anti-tragic, refusing the commonplace of the sea's insuperability and cutting across much of the mythologizing to which both writers and mariners have been predisposed. When Hanley has Fearon precociously intuit 'that all men who had shipped under sail were sailing in steam under protest' (Hanley, 1990a, p. 117), he is articulating a widespread preference for the days of the sailing ship, which 'attracted a more adventurous type of man than did the latter-day steamer' (Hugill, 1967, p. 3). Ex-shantyman, Stan Hugill, who sailed on the last commercial tea-clippers in the twenties, in setting out to give a realistic, unromantic social history of ports, still reveals a residual nostalgia, which sees the course of 20th-century history as one of decline. According to Hugill, even the days of steam and 'the tough Liverpool-Irish fireman' were being supplanted by a new age of 'Motor and Diesel' and he laments the passing of 'the ranting old ways of the past':

> Sailortown of the past may have been tawdry, but it had a romantic and glamorous

> tawdriness not to be found in such modern situations. (Ibid,. pp. 339.340)

The romantic tradition which identifies the past as a preferred state, as a defensive space against the onset of modernity has its origins in the birth of industrialization, which D H Lawrence saw as destructive of the human symbiotic relationship with the natural world:

> Beautifully, the sailing ship nodalizes the forces of the sea and wind, converting them to her purpose. There is no violation, as in a steamship, only a winged centrality. It is the perfect adjusting of ourselves to the elements, the perfect equipoise between them and us, which gives us a great part of our life-joy. The more we intervene machinery between us and the naked forces the more we numb and atrophy our own senses. (Lawrence, 1971, p. 134)

Lawrence is here writing of Henry Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast*, but for him 'the greatest seer and poet of the sea' was Melville (Ibid p. 134). In the Melvillian world-view, the human relationship with the sea, embodies some ideal of natural existence as opposed to the mechanized human condition, in which a will to dominate imperils the natural universal order. In the way that Melville describes them, however, whaling ships are not some surviving domain where a symbiosis is still possible, but floating factories, dedicated to the refinement of the raw material of the sea-mammal into the commodity of whale-oil. Neither are they serving some pre-industrial cottage-based society, but providing both the vital oil to lubricate the new giant machines of manufacture and the light to extend the period of the working day into the night.

In the heart of the ship lie the 'Try-works', giant vats for the boiling of whale blubber, and prescient of a more extensively industrialized mercantile marine. The tenders of the 'pots' are the pagan harpooneers, 'always the whale-ship's **stokers**', (emphasis added) but to Ishmael they are also the 'Tartarean shapes' of some infernal vision (Melville, 1978, p. 533). For this is a fiery medium, a floating hell which transforms those who partake in its evil enterprise:

> Here lounged the watch, when not otherwise employed, looking into the red heat of the fire, till their eyes felt scorched in their heads. Their tawny features, now all begrimed with smoke and sweat, their matted beards and the contrasting barbaric brilliancy of their teeth, all these were strangely revealed in the capricious

> emblazonings of the works. As they narrated to each other their unholy adventures, their tales of terror told in words of mirth; as their uncivilized laughter forked upwards out of them, like the flames from the furnace;... then the rushing Pequod, freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning a corpse, and plunging into that blackness of darkness, seemed the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul. (Ibid, pp. 533, 534)

Ahab's scar is the mark of his fiery Promethean soul in elemental conflict with the waters, through which he conducts his obsessive quest. The white whale, Moby-Dick, is the physical representation of nature's indomitability at odds with Ahab's human will to destruction. The Captain, in single-minded pursuit of the spoil, becomes increasingly dehumanized to the extent, finally, that he refuses the ordinary human rights of assistance to his fellow mariners and even repudiates the very raison d'etre of his enterprise: that of profit. The mechanized response finds its symbolic expression in the stump, which, since it is originally constituted of the very material which Ahab struggles against, is nearly his unmanning - in the literal sense of the word. It is replaced, however, by the carpenter's manufacture, symbolic of Ahab's insidious absorption, in both body and mind, by what is increasingly unnatural.

Hanley, though anxious to refuse the romanticism of the sea-writing tradition, nevertheless reserves for himself some of its symbolic power. His favourite illustrator was Alan Odle, whose frontispiece for *The Last Voyage* so pleased Hanley that he specifically asked for him as the cover designer for *Men in Darkness*, his first book for The Bodley Head. Recommending him to Ronald Boswell, Hanley declared that he was 'the only man who really understands my work' (Hanley/The Bodley Head, c Jul 1931 No. 44). Odle represents a departure from the kind of mechanistic vision of William Roberts, whose frontispiece for Hanley's only trench warfare story, *The German Prisoner*, transforms human figures into reified puppets (Figure 1). Odle, rather, shows the human figure, in starkly contrasting tones of black and white, undergoing some inner transmutation, where the recognizable organic forms of limb and muscle are being replaced by metallic or grainy wooden forms (Figures 2 and 3). Men are subject to the same unceasing will that drives Ahab, rendering them quasi-robotic, assuming the very nature of the machine that drives them. Out of the original Miltonic metaphysical model of which Ahab is the 19th century inheritor, 'darkness' has been reconceived, as both the obfuscating entity which

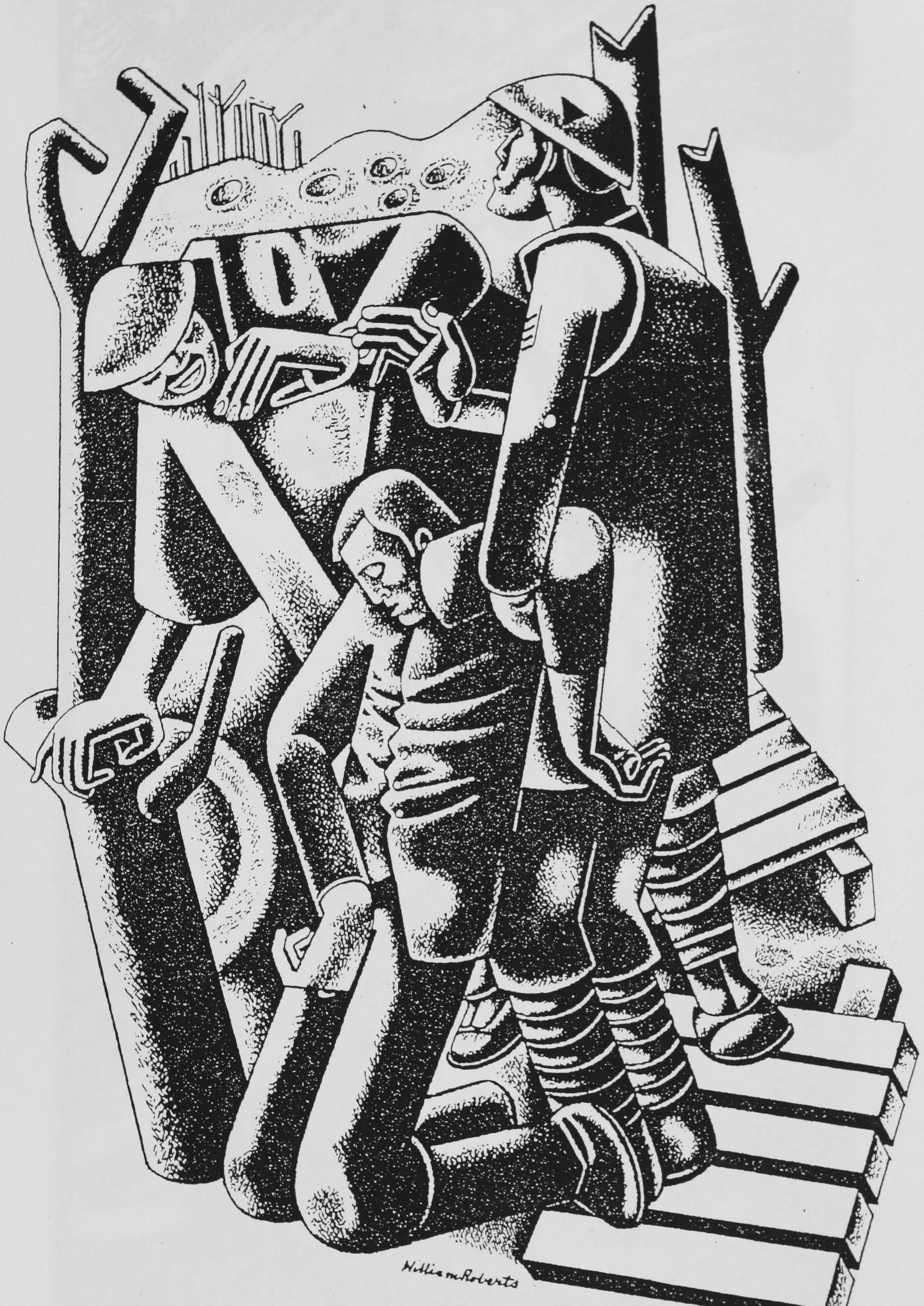

Figure 1: William Roberts frontispiece for *The German Prisoner*

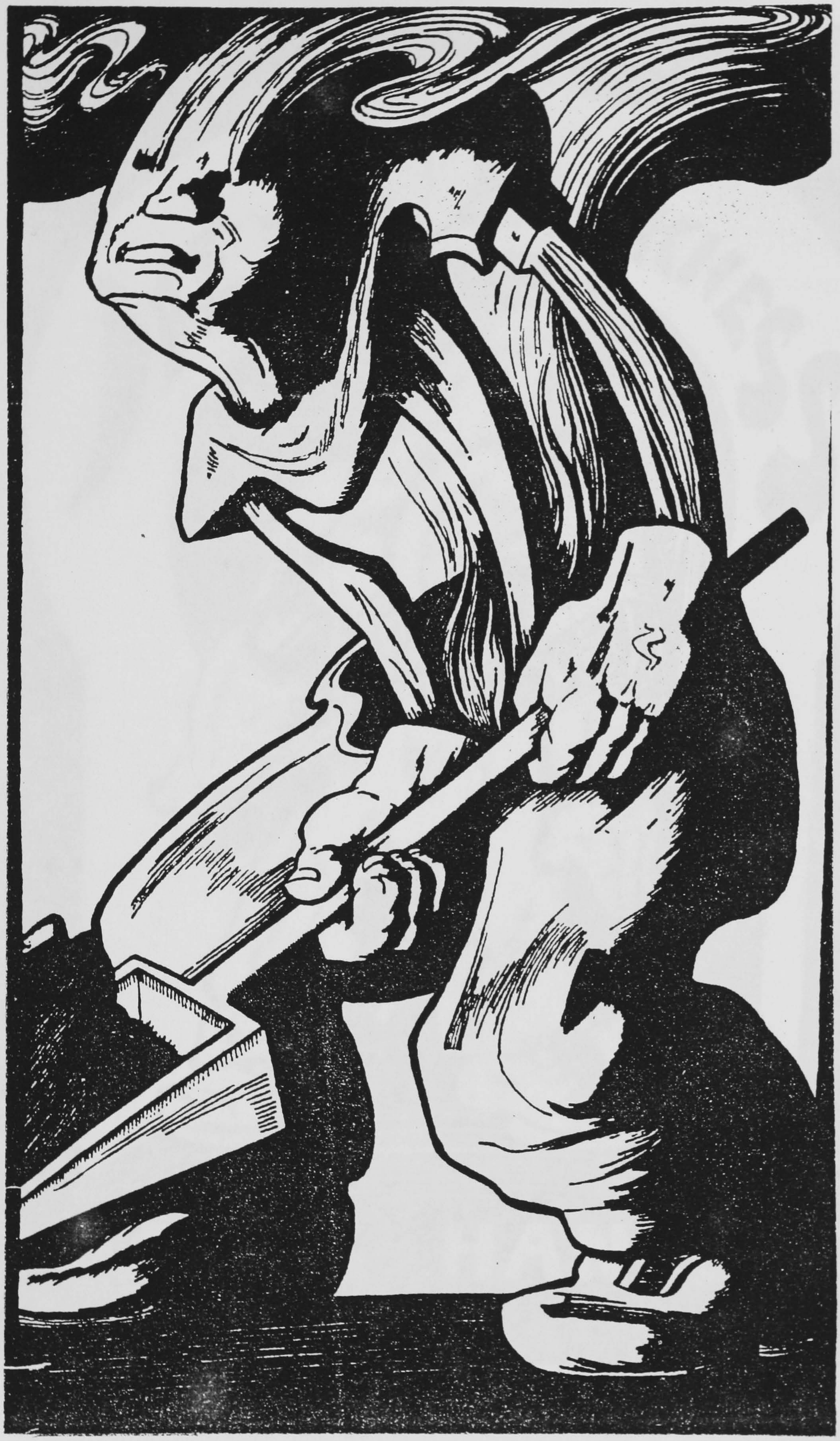

Figure 2: Alan Odle's frontispiece for *The Last Voyage*

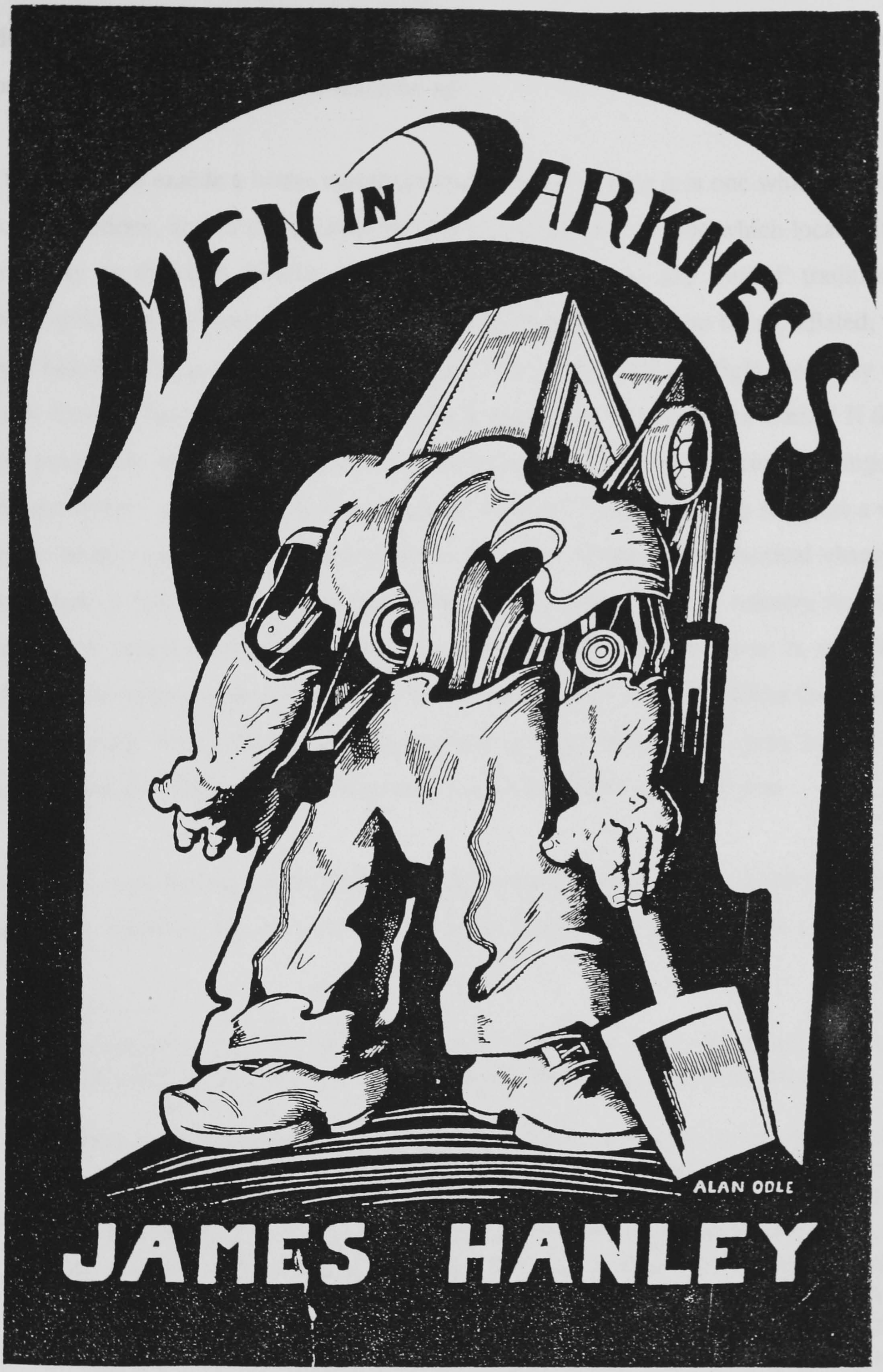

Figure 3: Odle's jacket design for *Men in Darkness*

holds, confines ('fastness'is one of Hanley's favourite nautical metaphors) and the more palpable transforming evil of the machine age.

If these images enable a better understanding of Hanley, then it is one which points to his contradictions, and to the problematics of a 20th-century writing which locates itself equivocally on that thin dividing line between the 'naturalist' and 'realist' traditions.[39] Is the implication of Hanley's writing that the mechanistic response be repudiated, that human beings become aware of their ideological dark 'fastness' and fight their way out, or, that this is a fundamental and unalterable condition of 'human nature itself'? If there is any possibility of change then this is surely demonstrated by the historical contingency of industrialism - a fundamental component of Hanley's realism - which suggests a vital rôle for human agency, but the naturalist world-view dictates that historical change is independent of human volition and therefore produces only a passive, reactive response. It is a view which, on the one hand is compelled to admit that there is something changeable in human beings, but which on the other refuses the possibilities that it could be revolutionary, substituting instead the grandiose notions of historical cycle, tragedy and myth as symbolic and temporary resolutions of an inevitable contradiction.

In Hanley's sea-writing, then, there is always a tension between two alternative forms of aesthetic, between the revolutionary and the tragic. Although there is a degree of

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[39] The distinction between these two terms is derived from Raymond Williams's conviction in *Modern Tragedy* of what became the literary definition of naturalism :

> ...what distinguished [naturalism] from the more important movement of realism was a **mechanical** description of men as the creatures of their environment, which literature recorded as if man and thing were of the same nature. The tragedy of naturalism is the tragedy of passive suffering, and the suffering is passive because man can only endure and never really change his world. The endurance is given no moral or religious valuation; it is wholly mechanical, because both man and his world in what is now understood as rational explanation, are the products of an impersonal and material process which though it changes through time has no ends. The impulse to describe and so change a human condition has narrowed to the simple impulse to describe a condition in which there can be no intervention by God or man, the human act of will being tiny and insignificant within the vast material process, universal or social, which at once determines and is indifferent to human destiny. (Williams, 1966, p. 69)

overlap between the two, the essential distinguishing factor is the degree to which the different forms are either potentially transformative or merely expressive of an historically transcendent or unchanging human nature. Although Hanley often expresses a preference for the latter, this by no means determines, once and for all, an ultimate horizon of interpretation for his work, since there remains a potential within the diverse strains of modernism which enables a social priority to be reclaimed in the interests of subordinated or marginalized discourses. Hanley's writing of the sea represents a struggle to make his own claim on behalf of the working class against the cultural dominance of a bourgeois tradition. Among the range of contemporaries and influences with whom Hanley engages are those writers who register the social and technological changes of modernity, but who, nonetheless, rely on the transcendent and immutable human qualities for the basis of an aesthetic. Such a figure is Joseph Conrad, one of the founders of the modernist movement and, for Hanley, at once the most seductive and most challenging of writers.

CHAPTER 6. HANLEY AND THE CONRADIAN PARADIGM

Realism and Romance: *Captain Bottell* and *Chance*

Hanley on many occasions expressed an exasperation with the sea novels of Joseph Conrad, detecting 'a smug falsity in Conrad's magnificence... What romance, what honour, but never for'ard of the bridge, nor aft for that matter' (Hanley/Chatto & Windus, 4 1 34 No. 8) and this is characteristic of his project, consistently to represent the ordinary seaman's view, the view from the fo'c'sle.[40] Conrad's work, as Hanley implies, identifies with that elevated position of the officers and maintains the ordinary seamen at a patrician distance, but his stance is essentially defensive. With industrialization came the rapid influx of democratic movements and ideas into the realm of shipping. In Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, the world of the sailing ship is under the twin threats of modernity: the insidious pollution of the machine and the militant presence of the 'sea-lawyer'. The description of the tug as 'an enormous and aquatic black beetle' which leaves 'a round black patch of soot undulating on the swell - an unclean mark of the creature's rest' leaves the reader in no doubt as to the author's opinion (Conrad, 1950a, p. 27). Yet his anti-industrialism, like Lawrence's, is inevitably retrograde: even in Conrad's seafaring days, from 1874 till 1893, steam had already superseded sail and although he invariably managed to get berths on sailing ships, 'these got more and more difficult to obtain as the years passed' (Watt, 1980, pp. 17,18). However, there was, for Conrad, a more significant object of his rearguard action. Just as the steam-driven tug taints the sea with its 'unclean mark' so the trouble-maker Donkin infects the *Narcissus* with the germ of democracy. The character of Donkin is so demonized by Conrad, the novel's argument so weighted against him, that any possible indictment of the merchant service is always already discredited. Donkin is made the instigator of an unnecessary and treacherous disruption, the men disgruntled by his 'bitter exasperation of something unjust and irremediable that would not be denied, and would whisper into their ears long after Donkin had ceased speaking'. The argument is sealed by the narrator's ironic proposition of Donkin's impossibly Utopian dream 'when every

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[40] See also 'A Writer's Day' in Hanley, 1953, pp. 78,79 and Hanley's wartime polemical defence of the persistent Donkin in 'Minority Report' (Hanley, Jun 1943, pp. 419-422).

lonely ship would travel over a serene sea, manned by a wealthy and well-fed crew of satisfied skippers' (Conrad, 1950a, p. 103). Although Hanley's critiques speak out against Conrad's unjust representation of men such as Donkin, his response in the novels is not to represent an alternative politically active working class but to propose various forms of embattled protagonist, thus raising the quality of working-class experience to the level of the universal and creating something heroic out of its struggles. Throughout the 1930s and into the Second World War, his work continues in the vein of *Men in Darkness*, yet mixes with the 'tragic' mode a certain triumphalism, a celebration of the working-class contribution to the safe and efficient operation of the merchant service.

His most expressly anti-Conradian novel is arguably *Captain Bottell* (1933).[41] The eponymous captain is a conscious antidote to the more familiar models of MacWhirr ('Typhoon') and Allistoun (*Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*) and, although there are both overt and oblique references to the body of Conrad's work, the novel represents, particularly, a reply to the populist absurdities of *Chance*, Conrad's first successful 'best-seller' (Watts, 1989, pp. 114-122). Conrad's novel, with the ubiquitous Marlow as the narrator, is the first of his works written consciously to appeal to a female readership, even though it returns to the sea voyage for its denouement and resolution (Ibid, p. 115). Hanley takes as his object of parody the novel's final fragment of melodrama in which the older Captain Anthony brings on aboard his reluctant younger bride. His obsessive passion renders the normal working relations of the ship 'unrestful', a situation Marlowe describes as 'a matter of an uneasy atmosphere disturbed by passions, jealousies, loves, hates and the troubles of transcendental good intentions, which, though ethically valuable, I have no doubt cause often more unhappiness than the plots of the most evil tendency' (Conrad, 1949, p. 376). The 'chance' theme is introduced at the very beginning with the surprise, last-minute replacement of the second officer, the first-berther Powell who becomes involved in the 'unhappy' situation of the newly-weds. Now Conrad certainly recognizes the potential volatility of his fictional shipboard situation when his narrator Marlow speaks of the 'dominating' even 'tyrannical' nature of passion which can drive its victim '"...into

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[41] Although *The Closed Harbour* and *Levine* might equally qualify (see Chapter 14, pp. 255-267).

all sorts of adventures, to the brink of unfathomable dangers, to the limits of folly, and madness, and death... "' (Ibid, p. 329). However, he does not expand upon that idea but, in the interests of a perceived readership, preserves at all costs the nobility of his male protagonist and the delicate sentiments of his heroine, resolving the conflicts into a conventional romance.

Hanley's basic plot has strong similarities: the steamship *Oroya*[42] takes on extra 'live cargo' in the form of the government official's wife, Mrs Willoughby, with whom the older Captain becomes infatuated, and also has a contingent late arrival, the stoker, Mulcare, whom Bottell mistakenly believes to be a sexual rival. Hanley grasps that potential which Conrad refuses by immersing his Captain in a turmoil of sexual jealousy and madness, bringing the whole to an emblematic climax in a fusion of fire and 'Typhoon'-like storm.[43] It is a conscious anti-romantic attack, deploying, against the dominant Conradian model, a range of intertextual allusions to both traditional and contemporary sea writing. It begins by dispelling the latter's self-created myth of the sailing-ship days. Captain Bottell had trained on 'full-rigged ships' and 'seen the full wonder of that great change from flapping canvas to throbbing pistons'. Yet there was 'nothing romantic in his nature' or any regret when he 'saw the last sail disappear beyond the horizon and the funnel rise in its place. He welcomed it' (Hanley, 1933, pp. 49,50).

However, the most curious of Hanley's characters is the outsider, Mulcare, who 'didn't look like a fireman', whom the 'black gang' suspect of being a 'one trip and swallow-the-anchor kind of fellow', a 'counter-jumper' or a 'school-teacher' (Ibid p. 45). Yet this is no Dana Hilliot (Lowry's one-tripper in *Ultramarine*) or Smitty (the recurring middle-class crewman of O'Neill's *SS Glencairn* series), but a stoker of twelve years experience. Neither is he a 'hairy ape', the eponymous stoker of O'Neill's play who so disturbs Mildred Douglas during her descent into the engine-room (O'Neill, 1988, p. 436). Mrs

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[42] Incidentally it typographically resembles Conrad's own real-life command, *The Otago*.

[43] See Stokes, 1964, pp. 98,99 for some incidental similarities with Captain MacWhirr in Conrad's 'Typhoon'.

Willoughby, in her glimpse into the crewman's underworld sustains no comparable trauma from her contact with the primitive lower orders but, through the increasing frequency of exchanges with Mulcare, develops a sympathy for the tribulations of the working class. Mulcare is a kind of anti-Marlow and alternative Donkin in one, the substitute narrative voice who provides Mrs Willoughby with a window into a different world. His story of wartime experiences on board an Atlantic liner evokes an image of a social structure in which an indifferent and hedonistic bourgeoisie - the first-class passengers - are sustained by, but are completely unaware of, the exploited working class in the stokehold. Mulcare's description is passionately partisan on behalf of his fellow seamen. Compared to those above who had '"abandoned themselves more and more to pleasure, to forgetfulness"', he was continually '"amazed at the strength, the control, the invulnerable nobility of those men, over whose heads existed the nightmare world"' (Hanley, 1933, p. 97).[44]

However, the fictional Mulcare demurs at a complete and uncompromising condemnation. Whereas the common experience is of exclusion, in Mulcare there is a sense of fascination, of being drawn in, a feeling that there is something of value in that world:

> ... I used to stand peering through the chink in the great folding doors of the saloon and watch. I could not tell you the effect upon me of what I saw. It was not terrible. It was beautiful. Once there was a concert. A great Russian pianist was playing in the saloon. I crammed my ear to the hole. I was lost. I was caught up and held. I could not tear myself away from that door. (Hanley, 1933, pp. 93,94)

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[44] Lennox Kerr confirms the sense of exclusion which is a common experience of sailors on the larger ocean liners. The Olympian upper decks are at a tantalizingly close yet unattainable level, forbidden to the stokers and deckhands:

> We saw the passengers as a smell of perfume and cigar smoke, as a bare-backed and luscious woman in the arms of a white-shirted and black-coated gentleman. To be a seaman then was dreadfully like being the pauper at the windows of wealth, or the erring daughter returning to gaze on her old home from the snow-covered pavements. That there are two sorts of people in this world was made painfully clear... (Kerr, 1940, p. 209)

In the central figure of Mulcare is the basic Hanleyan contradiction: the struggle between, on the one hand, an emphatic class identification and on the other, a motivation toward personal emancipation through the cultural values of the dominant class.[45] It is that sense of being exceptional, of possessing a knowledge and experience beyond the confines of a more narrowly class-based existence, which keeps Mulcare aloof. In much the same way that Robert Tressell's character, Owen, isolates and alienates himself from his fellow 'philanthropists', Mulcare's tirades against the crew for 'not having the guts' to speak out against their own exploitation serve only to keep him at a distance, a position he is content to maintain:

> He had never entered whole-heartedly into their daily round - never shared their hopes, their convictions, their grumbles. He was and was not of their kind. They hated him for his pessimism, his downright opinion, his cleverness, [...] He kept a safe distance between them. That was one of the rules he followed. He might work all his life as a stoker, be submerged amongst crowds of men, but he would not go under - he would not be swamped by them. (Ibid, p. 166)

The inability to resolve these contradictions causes the narrative focus to shift from Mulcare (he more or less disappears from the text) towards the growing obsession of Bottell with Mrs Willoughby and his increasingly precarious grasp of reality. The two characters, both of them self-obsessed, are representative of the callous indifference of the ruling class (the latter its ideological apologist, the former its obedient servant) to the everyday struggles of the ordinary worker. While they are fixated on their private pre-occupations, the officers and crew desperately struggle to keep the ship afloat. Mrs Willoughby, already accused by Mulcare of relishing the romance of her situation and, because of her class position, invulnerable to the effects of her presence, becomes for the crew the source of their misfortunes: she is to them 'A real Jonah' or 'Just dunnage' (Ibid, p. 378). Hanley's indulgence in the commonplace superstition concerning women aboard ships is one more component in what is, in terms of narrative position, a convoluted text. What takes over at the end is the expressionist mode, a descent into Bottell's nightmare world; the last moments of the captain as he pursues hallucinatory

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[45] Hanley, himself a self-taught pianist, was an enthusiast for Russian music, particularly that of Mussorgsky (See Chapter 15, pp. 294 and 299-300).

figures in the bowels of the sinking ship. It is a writing whose aesthetics owe much more to Hanley's preferred sea visionary, Melville, than to Conrad, O'Neill or any other writer of the sea. In the final infernal vision Bottell, Ahab-like, is engulfed by his own obsessive madness in an apocalyptic conflict between the fiery, mechanical forces of the engines and the watery, protoplasmic agencies of nature. The entire below-deck world fragments, transmutes, as steel forms become flower-like (cf Strindberg's *Dreamplay*), and pumps change to fleshy limbs - until Bottell is finally submerged, enmeshed in a massive hallucinatory entanglement of female hair.

The Sea and Wartime

Whatever the vagaries of Hanley's 'tragic' expressionist mode in *Captain Bottell*, the final word given to Mulcare in the lifeboat as the ship goes down aligns the text with an alternative realist tendency in his writing. Mulcare, when asked about his relationship with Mrs Willoughby, enigmatically curses the name of her husband (Ibid, p. 422). This has nothing to do with amorous rivalry, but rather refers to Mulcare's realization that Mr Willoughby is the same 'Major Willoughby', notorious for his superintending of troopships to the Dardanelles, where he gained 'a sort of fame that harbours not a little shame... a sort of fame that must by now stink in his own nostrils' (Ibid, p. 189). The disdain for anyone connected with the disastrous Gallipoli campaign comes out of Hanley's own frequent troopship voyages to and from that peninsula. It is an issue which emerges in 'Narrative' and which is made the subject of a long novel, *Hollow Sea*. In these texts, Hanley, vents his anger on what he saw as the reckless manipulation of ordinary servicemen's lives by a callous and indifferent military bureaucracy.

In Hanley's ships Conrad's idealized hierarchical world has more or less waned and new ways of working have been established which bear a close resemblance to that of other enclosed workplaces, such as the coal-face. The merchant service - unlike its military counterpart, the 'senior' service - has developed an unwritten code of working practice, which, because of the exigencies of extremely hazardous conditions, is based (like coal-mining) on mutual self-help and collective responsibility, rather than on strict hierarchical chains of command. It is in that spirit that Hanley retains a certain respect for the fair-minded captain, the decent officer while on the other hand fiercely condemning the

powerful control of the owners, under whose sway the captain and officers - just as foremen and overseers in the mines - become mere servants of profit. It is also the spirit which informs Hanley's implicit disapproval of the military regulations imposed on shipping during wartime.

The full history of merchant service involvement in the First World War has yet to be written. The official historical accounts tend to be concerned primarily with strategic gains and losses or the processes of political and military decision-making in which the whole nation is united in gallant defence against a barbarous enemy.[46] What is not represented is the extent of accumulating resentment among both officers and crews in reaction to their arbitrary and insouciant treatment by the naval and political leadership. Tony Lane has written extensively on the myth of the 'people's war' ideology in relation to merchant seamen during the Second World War. According to him, there is little to 'support the theory of WWII as a people's war'. Rather it is the case 'that the social relations in Britain were in general no more harmonious than they were before, and that the longer they continued, the more divided Britain became...' (Lane, 1990, pp. 8,9).

In reading both Hanley's fictional and non-fictional accounts, and those of his contemporaries, the same kinds of discrepancies and disjunctions can be detected between the official and unofficial accounts of First World War mercantile marine practice. Unlike the majority of those involved in war activity - mainly volunteers or conscripts - merchant seamen were already facing hazards daily, regularly performing duties which, in wartime, are generally reckoned to be exceptional or heroic. As Tony Lane argues 'there were many instances of bravery but not because war made seafarers braver than before - it was just that there were many more moments of danger. They went on doing their job because in war, as in peace, they had to earn a living...' (Ibid p. 9). At the outbreak of the First World War, however, it was more than the daily hazards of the sea or enemy attack they

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[46] See for example L. Cope Cornford's propagandist *Merchant Seamen in War*, 1918, a chronicle of incidents in which defenceless merchant vessels are cunningly waylaid by German submarines. The crews of the latter invariably indulge in 'acts of piracy', insult the British flag, fire on men attempting to abandon ship, etc. This barbarism is countered with singular acts of heroism on the part of British officers and masters, whose leadership and gallantry alone are responsible for the saving of lives and ships.

had to contend with for, despite there being many adaptations to merchant ships for military purposes - conversions of holds to carry troops, horses, etc - there was no widespread improvement in the conditions of seamen themselves. In the first twelve months of the war, whereas 672 personnel in the Army and 412 in the navy died of disease, 1,328 died of this cause in the merchant service (Course, 1963, p. 276). Random inspections of merchant ships revealed there to be no significant improvement in the insanitary and pestilent fo'c'sles since 1904, and despite Admiralty recommendations, little was done to remedy this. Thus by the end of the war there was proportionately a far greater danger of dying aboard a merchant ship than there was on active service in the navy or in the infantry (Home, 1922, pp. 83,84).

Hanley's *Broken Water* says comparatively little about conditions, but the general testimony from both wartime service and in the years immediately after, gives the impression of what was to be expected on British tramp steamers - '"I fired on the Monkey boats for fifteen years but this bloody thing's got them skinned a mile for dirt"' (O'Mara, 1934, p. 157). 'I had never been on board a tramp steamer in my life and I did not believe that anything pertaining to the sea could be so dirty and repulsive' (O'Flaherty, 1930, p. 88). Surprisingly, although it was an offence punishable in law, the practice of desertion from British ships seems to have continued during wartime, the favourite berths being on either American or Canadian ships.[47] Jumping ship was made all the more easy and attractive by the latter's immensely superior pay and conditions, and by the fact that the U.S. authorities refused all requests from the Admiralty to prosecute British deserters (MacKenzie, 1940, p. 18).[48]

Undoubtedly, the greatest of seamen's fears was the moment the ship entered the 'danger zone', where the unseen submarine could strike so suddenly from beneath (see Hanley, 1937a, pp. 185-9; O'Mara, 1934, pp. 263-5). Unbelievably, however, it was not

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[47] On the law see O'Mara, 1934, pp. 262,263; for actual instances of desertion see Mackenzie, 1940, p. 18; O'Mara, 1934, pp. 176,243; Hanley, 1937a, pp. 169, 208-9.

[48] Course gives the information that in 1917 the U.S. war zone bonus raised the Fireman's wage to £18 per month whereas on British vessels it went from £8.10s to only £10 (Course, 1963, p. 274).

until early 1917 and only due to persistent lobbying by the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union that Lloyd George finally recognized 'the sacrifices of ordinary seamen' and guns were made an automatic provision on merchant ships (Tupper, 1938, pp. 168-169). Ironically, the Royal Naval gunners assigned to operate the newly fitted weaponry were not as welcome as might have been expected. The arrival of both ordinary ratings and senior naval officers to supervise merchant vessel modifications and convoy arrangements had the unforeseen effect of exacerbating the traditional antagonism between the two services. On board the *A.10* in Hanley's *Hollow Sea*, the two naval ratings in charge of the gun 'don't never go for'ard' to mess with the regular crew and consequently are viewed as 'damned snobs' by Captain Dunford (Hanley, 1950a, pp. 59,60) and are hated by the men for being 'so clean, faces and buttons shining, almost rivalling the sun for sheer brilliance, always spick and span [...] Dirt in the Navy couldn't be honest dirt' (Ibid, p. 61).

Similarly, in the earlier 'Narrative', two stokers in a pub commiserate with each other in fearful expectation of their ship's transfer to naval jurisdiction. Smith is particularly vehement towards 'men known as stewards', which for him are the epitome of all things naval. This was not only Smith's particular 'weakness' but was applicable to 'all merchantmen, whose hatred of all naval men and methods was a genuine and full-hearted hatred. They hated servility, they hated uniform, they hated old women's work, they hated swank' (Hanley, 1931, pp. 35,36). Such vituperation is a reminder of the hostility in Hanley's household whenever his mother's naval relations came to visit. The use of the word 'weakness' is of course ironic, disclosing an authorial sympathy towards his father's position and, by extension, to that of 'all merchantmen' with whom Hanley clearly aligns himself.[49]

Hanley's condemnations of naval interference (and the examples given are two of many)

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[49] Kerr's opinion of crews on ocean liners after the war was that they were mostly 'ex-naval ratings and poor shipmates'. Unpopular in merchant vessels because of being 'trained to a servile obedience', they were considered only good for 'soft jobs as special hands' (Kerr, 1940, pp. 209,210).

are more than a narrative device to add tension, but rather form part of a polemic against what the ordinary seaman was forced to endure: namely what the author describes variously as 'the great game of conundrums played with the lives of simple men' or 'the philosophy of high explosives' (Hanley, 1937a, p. 198; 1950a, p. 1). The first signs of autocratic duplicity are the physical changes that overtake merchant ships when they are requisitioned and adapted for war service - the S.S. *Corinthian* in 'Narrative' becomes transport *AO.2* under government orders and the *Helicon* in *Hollow Sea* is changed to the *A.10*. Both ships are painted a uniform grey and all signs of their former identity are obliterated. Secretive and unaccountable alterations are being made to their holds and superstructure, the whole process of preparation and embarkation becomes mysterious, even sinister:

> The great decks barren of life appeared ghostly, more gigantic. Ordinarily such a ship carried two thousand passengers, and at night the darkness would be stabbed by her thousand and one brilliant lights. Now all things had changed. She was a ship that rode the waters no longer proudly, but rather slunk silently, furtively away like a stricken giant. (Hanley, 1931, p. 74)

Hanley's initial feelings on learning that he himself was to sign on a 'mystery ship', 'sailing for destination unknown', had been full of the romance and excitement of wartime (Hanley, 1937a, pp. 139,140). His first trip is 'a becalmed one... all colour and excitement and adventure, high songs, money scattered about, brave words, sounds of cheers' (Ibid, p. 190). It is a feeling shared by Pat O'Mara who, on the day war is declared in Liverpool, records a sudden change of mood in the slums: the customary 'lethargic deadness and dullness of the dank alleys seemed to vanish, and instead of the desolate quietness at night, there would be lights and gayety [sic] and, paradoxical though it may seem, a strange new-found happiness' (O'Mara, 1934, p. 140). Yet Hanley's youthful enthusiasm was to be rudely shattered by the reality of the troopship voyages he made to the Mediterranean, to that 'dread peninsula, that battered, disease-ridden, scorched, blood-soaked land carrying the pestilence of some unearthly whore' (Hanley, 1937a, p. 190).[50] Years of travelling to and from Salonika, initially to deliver shiploads

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[50] See also the same words used in *Hollow Sea* (Hanley, 1950a, p. 234).

of troops to the continual carnage of the Gallipoli campaign, then subsequently to supply the remaining garrisons, left Hanley a changed person: a child, as he was often to testify, suddenly grown adult. He, too, along with other crew members was complicit in the casual exploitation of the undernourished and vulnerable conscripts below decks: the petty thefts, the selling of food, the gambling. It is on that subject, that one of Hanley's few uncharacteristically painful revelations breaks through the restrained surface of the autobiographical writings. It was not so much 'the horror of the whole filthy business, but the calm almost callous acceptance of it. The war, in fact, had ceased to have any meaning'. After so many voyages 'when days and months grew to years and one was still doing the same thing, it ceased to be exciting, it became ordinary' (Hanley, 1937a, p. 206).

Hanley's *Hollow Sea* is an elaboration of those insights only sketched in *Broken Water*, and an ambitious expansion of the polemics of 'Narrative': in both fictional versions the complicit perpetrators of the war's horrors are clearly identified. In 'Narrative' Hanley cunningly withdraws the narrative voice and gives the expression of condemnation to mad Brady, the shipwrecked stoker who, having in desperation drunk the forbidden seawater, lets out a stream of splenetic abuse to the consternation of his fellow survivors. These are no deranged babblings, however, but vivid memories of the wounded lying helpless on the troopship decks. Because of the amount of blood and filth Brady was, incredibly, ordered to hose the decks:

> Can't do it - can't - can't - can't - bastard laughing there, bleedin' Aussies lying there all muck and s[hit] and blood on their gobs sick on their tunics, doing it there as they couldn't move - skipper said too many men on this ship too many men. Soldiers everywhere like flies and bloody wounds festering how could we get the bastards into a port before their wounds did them in. Washing down at night, poor bastards couldn't move, best rations for Hamilton and his muckin' staff, special oranges in cases for those swine damn-all for the bleedin' troops. (Hanley, 1931, p. 109)

As well as Sir Ian Hamilton, the incompetent Allied commander of the Gallipoli campaign, its instigator, Winston Churchill, is also indicted: 'watch the poor bastards trying to carry a pack down that cargo shoot or plank or damned gangway bloody Turks

did it on them rightaway three cheers for that fellow Churchill - swine' (Ibid, p. 111).[51]

In *Hollow Sea*, there is no comparable naming, but the condemnation is there from the very beginning in Captain Dunford's sullen resentment of arbitrary control: the 'sealed orders', the feeling of being 'something alien' on his own ship. Once the ship's name has disappeared, Dunford feels that 'the old life [has] flown' and has gloomy forebodings of the future. Under a sudden 'sentence of isolation' he 'already seemed to sense the enormity of the wilderness into which she would soon thread her way. From stem to stern, from the eyes of her to the poop, she was grey. A mask' (Hanley, 1950a, pp. 8, 15,16). It is also there in the very detail of a disastrous landing, when the battered *A.10* is forced to withdraw from its offshore anchoring with an unexpected 'cargo' of wounded and dead. The chaos of the landing, the awful vision of destruction is given in turn, to the Captain, the Bosun, and finally to Rochdale the look-out man. In a turmoil of anguish at the horror he is forced to witness, Rochdale's feelings veer pendulum-like between elation and despair:

> "Once I hated darkness, now I like it."
> It would soon be light. Suddenly he shouted at the top of his voice, "Terrific! Terrific!"
> The spell was broken. How wrought up he had been, how calm he was now. Two hundred and one wounded for Alexandria, and one hundred and one dead. Well some would go to Alexandria. He knew that. But the others? He shut his eyes. He wanted to forget all that, that pestilential 'tween deck, that sepulchral hold, dark, stuffy, coffin-shaped, smelly, heritage of the lucky no longer tied to things. Free. (Ibid, p. 157)

The language is characteristic Hanley, where the detail of realistic observation is overlain

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[51] Hanley wrote to his anarchist friend and bookseller, Charles Lahr, in the week when a number of papers had reviewed *Men in Darkness*:

> There is a much of a muchness about the reviews so far, though the *New Statesman* was fine and a very comical one by *Mackenzie* [Compton] in the *Daily Mail* (you should read it) if only to see how he attacked Cowper Powys for his preface and me for insulting Sir Ian Bloody Hamilton, as if I didn't know all about his capers & C. Mackenzie's too. Jazzing in Greece whilst the poor bloody troops fought. (Hanley/Lahr (a), 9 10 31, No 9)

with those familiar Hanleyan words: 'mask', 'sepulchral', 'coffin'. Increasingly as the narrative progresses, that mode threatens to dominate, becoming more and more insistent, taking the aesthetic from its realist base to the realms of absurdity. It reaches its extreme point when, turned away from the port of Alexandria because of suspected plague, the ship becomes a floating coffin, a 'death ship', since the Captain decides, in protest, that he is unable to 'dump' the dead in the absence of any orders to do so. Just as in *Boy*, where a divergent aesthetic appears to contradict the novel's realist logic, the apparent absurdity of Dunford's refusal to 'bury' the dead threatens to transgress the bounds of credibility. On the other hand, the very extremity of the situation sustains the polemical strength of the novel, since that refusal, credible or otherwise, cries out against the reduction of human beings to the level of detritus, as so much rubbish to be dumped.

Dunford's action is also an intensely moral one, providing a centre of value for the novel, yet the actions of the ordinary seamen - particularly the stewards - in heroically transforming themselves into nursing carers for the wounded, adds a further political dimension. Rochdale, the observer, is the all-seeing eye, the class representative who instinctively knows who carries the real burden of the Captain's decision. It is he who comforts the distraught Marvel who, driven to the verge of breakdown through caring for those driven mad by their wounds, has appointed himself the secret disposer of the dead. Rochdale wonders if the captain's sudden decision to bury the dead has been inspired by the compassionate Marvel, but '... no he hadn't. He hadn't heard about him at all. He'd heard nothing. He wouldn't ever hear anything either, he was different. He was up there. They were down here. Two different places' (Hanley, 1950a, p. 293). Yet that same steward eventually hangs himself and the young boy in his charge dies, just as the men begin a makeshift shipboard concert: a riotous and carnivalesque release from their unaccustomed burdens of duty. At the end of the *A.10*'s tortuous voyage, the absurdist juxtaposition of tragedy and farce seems to have overtaken the polemical project and a question emerges from the various threads of the narrative as to the precise meaning of Hanley's chaotic war at sea. Despite his careful balancing of the discourse, certain ideas struggle to dominate. As the captain contemplates the war's devastations, he realizes the meaninglessness of the entire experience. Finally habituated to the deaths and departures, thought could not recover that sense of 'purpose, there was no longer balance [...] One

was dragged into the filth with the others, soiled. One didn't even believe in their precious conundrums, nor in those far-off voices that not only mapped lands and oceans, but poisoned the wells of living there' (Hanley, 1950a, p. 323).

What underlies the Captain's thoughts is precisely an authorial search for, but ultimately a failure to discover, meaning. While his discourse condemns the power of a militaristic absolutism, it goes no further than a recognition of the way the machinery of wartime distorts the natural-seeming rhythms and practices of sea-going life, as though a cessation of hostilities would restore the 'balance', rediscover the 'purpose'. It is another instance of the Hanleyan struggle, in which the commitment to a specifically working-class realist perspective is compromised by the dominant paradigm of an absurdist or tragic vision, attempting to reduce the complexities of a putatively diverse and open text to a singular and dominating closure. As the voices of the crew would seem to confirm:

> Some had made pacts, some had not. Some would return to A.10, some would desert. They had seen men whole and broken, living and dead, sane and mad. What did that matter now? To hell with everything. Blast the bloody war. Blast everything. Here was the shore. There the little crowd waiting (Ibid, p. 355).

The Sailor as Hero

While Hanley's stories of war at sea raise questions concerning an ambiguity of interpretation, they are unequivocal in refusing the idea of individual heroism in wartime, the emphasis being on collective or mutually responsible action on the part of officers and ordinary seamen against the alien exigencies of authority. However, there is an alternative project in those works not directly concerned with war which singles out a representative, even heroic individual as a kind of maritime 'Everyman'. As such Hanley is working within a tradition of sea literature stretching right back to Anglo-Saxon poems such as 'The Wanderer' and 'The Seafarer', which identify the mariner, isolated from the community and its protection, as expressive of the ultimate precariousness of the human condition. In subsequent developments the 'wanderer' becomes uniquely circumspect, at once both the possessor of a certain wisdom and the bearer of the world's troubles. So Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, Melville's Ishmael, Billy Budd, Captain Vere, the Norwegian Flying Dutchman are archetypal representatives, battlers against the elemental

powers of nature and the human will to destruction.

Hanley's intervention in that tradition comes just after the American, Eugene O'Neill, whose early *SS Glencairn* plays, written between 1913 and 1917, were the first 20th-century works set in the stokehold and the fo'c'sle of a modern tramp steamer. O'Neill's sailors are naïve, rough, drunken, speaking in the crudest vernacular, yet they have primarily a symbolic function whereby 'the individual life is made significant just by the struggle' (O'Neill quoted in Williams, 1966, p. 116) thus raising the ordinary seaman's stature to the grandiose level of the 'tragic' and the 'heroic'. In those early plays, the individual struggle is against a range of adverse conditions which are the normal experience of seafaring - life-threatening work in the stokehold (*Bound East for Cardiff*), the danger of being 'shanghaied' (*The Long Journey Home*), the petty suspicions and rivalries of the fo'c'sle (*In the Zone*), and the frustrations of confinement for long periods at sea (*The Moon of the Caribbees*). However, the later *The Hairy Ape* of 1922 is an extreme development of the idea of the seaman as a single representative figure of humanity. The archetypal Yank has metamorphosed from tragic hero or indomitable optimist of the shorter plays to the ultimate victim of modernity. O'Neill's idea of the modern stoker is clearly a source for Hanley's in the early stories where he is represented has having undergone some inner transformation. O'Neill's Paddy laments the days of sail when 'a ship was part of the sea, and a man was part of a ship, and the sea joined all together and made it one', and asks Yank why he identifies so readily with the steam ship, 'the bloody engines pounding and throbbing and shaking - choking our lungs wid coal dust - breaking our backs and hearts in the hell of the stokehole - feeding the bloody furnace - feeding our lives along wid the coal...' (O'Neill, 1988, p. 431).

Yank's reply is expressive of a certain triumphal optimism in the early twentieth century and returns to a pre-First World War structure of feeling recalling the Futurist and Vorticist conceptions of the machine-age as forward-looking and heroic. Paddy's worldview is dead, he no longer belongs in the modern world:

> YANK ... I start somep'n and de woild moves! It - dat's me! - de new dat's moiderin' de old! I'm de ting in coal dat makes it boin; I'm steam and oil for de engines; I'm de ting in noise dat makes you hear it; I'm smoke and express trains

> and steamers and factory whistles; I'm de ting in gold dat makes it money! And I'm what makes iron and steel! Steel dat stands for de whole ting! And I'm steel - steel - steel! I'm de muscles in steel, de punch behind it!. (Ibid, p. 432)

Yank's perception of a new unity of man and machine is soon overturned, however, by an authorial conviction that the machine's transformative power is self-defeating. It will ultimately propel humanity retrogressively to some atavistic state: a bizarre reversal of the evolutionary process in which human being will become ape. Whereas Hanley might share some of O'Neill's vision of modern humanity as bearing some metaphorically homologous relation with the machine, he does not go to such extremes. Hanley is at times seduced by the convenience of animalism - e.g. the description of Chris Bush and other working-class characters as 'bovine' - but the idea of the 'Hairy Ape' has rather too many negative connotations, not the least of which is the familiar imperialist representation of colonized racial groups, including the Irish, as 'ape-like'. Hanley is aware of the pitfalls in animalizing the human figure: Horrigan in 'Feud' may have an unfortunate stoop with arms, 'unduly long like those of an ape', but that physical state has been produced by the deforming effect of a life-time's work: it was not 'the weight of his sixty-one years' which produced the deformity, 'but rather that of two-hundred-weight sacks of sugar, three-hundred-weight sacks of cement, hind-quarters of beef' (Hanley, 1931, p. 148). Captain Dunford may be momentarily reminded of animals when looking into the darkness of the firemen's fo'c'sle, - the blackness 'beneath the eyes' the faces, the gestures, the figures - but the idea of 'apes' is dismissed with a peremptory 'No!': the visual signs of their fatigue are also the markers of their selfless devotion to duty and of their humanity (Hanley, 1950a, p. 53).

O'Neill's representative mariner has for Hanley become too debased, too irredeemably compromised, by the dominance of the machine. Conversely, throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s, the latter writer becomes increasingly interested in the ordinary sailor's emblematic potential as a figure of redemption and, above all, of human and social emancipation. Hanley's contemporary ideal for the embattled seafarer was realized when he read and reviewed B Traven's *The Death Ship* for *The Spectator* in 1934, describing it as the 'finest modern sea story I have read... dreadfully real, horrible, fantastic, but disgustingly true' (Hanley, 1934a, p. 131). Traven's Gerard Gales is the modern Ishmael

but, unlike Melville's hero, is no free and autonomous vagabond but, due to the loss of his seaman's papers, a reluctant itinerant, expelled from any port or country he tries to enter. When he finally gains a berth it is in the kind of ship that, because of its flouting of every safety regulation imaginable, signs on only those desperate enough not to be deterred:

> It was rumoured, and I am sure the rumour was well-founded, that the skipper had several times gone out of town to the gallows, where, in the silence of night, with the help of the bos'n, he carefully examined the hanged to find one in whom there was enough life left to let him say, "Yes cap'n, sure I'll sign on." (Traven, 1964, p. 102)

While the style is predominantly satirical, *The Death Ship* is also replete with expressions of modernist modes of thought, invoking the world of Strindberg and O'Neill: 'There were times when I felt that my hands were steam shovels, that my legs and arms moved on ball-bearings, and that all the insides of my body were but running wheels' ; 'We all were dead. All of us were convinced we were on our way to the fishes... We all knew that we were the moribunds' (Ibid, pp. 174, 232). Yet this is not to imply that humanity itself has arrived at some irrevocably moribund state, which is the conventional and disabling wisdom of expressionism. The narrative makes it clear that the Death Ship's environment is ultimately subject to a materialist analysis and the sailor is, at the same time, representative of the general conditions of the worker under capitalism. While Traven's novel is imbued with extensive literary and classical references to the after-life and morbidity, particularly in its description of the stokehold - in the author's words 'the underworld... a smoke-filled hell' (Ibid p. 145) - its ironic first person narrative is, in effect, incisively polemical. Sailors are 'the gladiators of today' but for them there is no shining armour, nor the cheering of the crowd, only hunger and rotten food 'because a shipping company cannot compete with the freight rates of other companies':

> We the gladiators of today. We die in rags, without mattresses or blankets. We die worse than hogs in Chic [Chicago]. We die in silence in the stokehold... We die in rags for you, Imperator Capitalism! We have no names, we have no souls, we have no country, we have no nationality. We are nobody, we are nothing (Ibid, p. 125).

What Hanley identifies with here is the idea of a real heroism in the ordinary individual against impossibly adverse conditions: his contribution to the necessary recuperation of the working-class image in literary representation. Writing to Geoffrey Faber in 1934, Hanley takes issue with the publishing world's attitude toward the 'proletariat' who 'from Dickens down to D H Lawrence' has been represented as 'a sort of dullard, a kind of buffoon and low comedian of the lowest tastes. But that is all wrong' (Hanley/Faber 11 1 34). Against these odds, Hanley sets out to redress the balance, embarking on a project of emancipation; that is to represent the lives of ordinary members of the working-class as complex, rich in inner thought, noteworthy. Twenty years later, on the occasion of a radio adaptation of *Sailor's Song* (1943) the author, looking back on the social and political conditions which informed his writing of the novel, echoes Traven in his view of sailors as exceptional and exemplary. His sailor, Manion is no mere individual, 'but all the sailors in the world'. Recognizing no frontiers, 'he belongs to a great company of men forever moving, backwards and forwards, across the seas of the world'. For Hanley 'sailors are the final, the ultimate brotherhood' (Hanley, 1954, p. 3).

Sailor's Song can, in a sense, be considered the climax of a series of novels embarked upon around the mid-1930s. Its common theme is the shipwreck which functions as the ultimate measure of the supreme virtues - sacrifice, forbearance, survival - among humanity's ordinary constituents. Two of these works are not primarily concerned with the sea yet in both Hanley creates a dénouement where the life-or-death hazards of sea-life afford a kind of alternative perspective on the conflicts ashore. The focus of what have been primarily city-based novels shifts to the sea only at the very end, at a moment of crisis. The first manifestation of that new departure is in *Stoker Bush*, published in 1935. For the greater part the narrative is informed by Hanley's pre-occupations with an inherent 'weakness' in human beings.[52] Here the concentration is on marital conflict between the eponymous stoker and his wife Anne, but the last part concerns Chris's discovery of a compensatory strength when, restored to his 'natural' medium of the sea, he is transformed and redeemed by his actions aboard a stricken liner.

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[52] See e.g. Hanley's remark that 'a character at its weakest as well as its strongest can and always does interest me' (Hanley/Walpole, 15 11 31).

Having received in New York the news of Anne's unfaithfulness, Chris resolves to return immediately and win her back but, because his ship is bound for ports beyond, he momentarily decides to stow away on a passenger ship imminently bound for England. In his haste to avoid discovery, Chris is forced to hide in a first-class cabin, but is trapped by the return of its drunken English occupant, an academic the same age as himself, and the Yankee 'highflyer' he has picked up. As Chris, from beneath the lower bunk, is forced to endure their lovemaking and, to him, their exotic and enigmatic conversation, Hanley's preference emerges for the simplicity of the working-class sailor as opposed to the sordid corruption of the 'clever' rich. Chris is compelled to smile 'thinking how in society people had each other, as though was nothing. Just like 'avin breakfast or going to the lavo' (Hanley, 1935b, p. 280). Upon discovery, Chris is not reported but discovers he has become a diversion, the scrutinized object of bourgeois curiosity, 'a figure from a strange fantastic world' (Ibid, p. 285). This is another instance of that significant moment, recurring in other Hanley works, when two irreconcilable worlds meet.[53] Chris is not reported because he provides the rich with a diversion, detecting between them 'a sort of telepathy' communicating '"We might have done worse, dear. Gone to the ship's concert"'(Ibid, p. 284). Yet this civilized gloss evaporates with the sudden catastrophic contingency of the iceberg, as the two men - sophisticated member of the elite and ordinary seaman - are thrown together in a battle with ice and sea. In the extreme conditions, the lecturer is reduced to raving powerlessness; totally dependent on Chris's sanity, strength and superior maritime knowledge. At a crucial moment, as Chris struggles to keep them both afloat, the dead weight of his companion gets heavier and heavier and '[t]he lecturer from America who said society was coming to an end was slowly pulling Chris under the water' (Ibid, p. 309). However, Chris's perseverance eventually saves them both and the sailor finally emerges triumphant, not only in the physical sense but as a latent life-force shouldering the cumbrous and impeditive burden of a declining civilization.

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[53] For Hanley's twentieth-century working-class perspective on Baudelaire's 'flâneur', see Part III Chapter 9, pp. 128-129 - the dispassionate young philosopher in 'Rubbish'- and Chapter 11, pp. 174-176 for a discussion of the relationship between Peter Fury and the mysterious Professor Titmouse.

Denny Fury's struggle to save his ailing young trimmer in *Our Time is Gone* (1939: third in The Furys sequence) is just as heroic and emblematically significant, yet in a different sense. The sea is the medium which engulfs, transforms, wreaks revenge on the industrialized ship and the human despoilers of the earth:

> He could not move. He was trapped. He was choking. He faced the sea, the bright sun, and from where he stood, held, all the world looked beautiful. Innocent blue water, drenching, indifferent sun, blue sky... the stokehold had lost its darkness, its smells, its feel, the stokehold held only an alien smell of the sea (Hanley, 1949, pp. 525,528).

Denny's self-sacrifice is no mere act of heroism, but is associated with a will to restoration after the industrialized and mechanized horrors of the war. In the meantime, his wife, Fanny, not knowing of his ordeal, has joined the gangs of women employed to scrub the filth and stench of war from the returning 'deathships'. Their work is similarly restorative and redemptive. Just as the sea invades and purifies Denny's ship, so Fanny and her fellow workers toil to wash away the pollutants of war: the combination of Denny's self-sacrifice and Fanny's act of contrition symbolically redeem both the family's and the world's will to self-destruction. When Mrs Gumbs, a fellow-worker, wonders whether Fanny isn't doing 'some kind of penance or something' she is articulating a truth about a certain form of working-class sensibility (Ibid, p. 512).

Meanwhile the same kinds of narrative momentum had been maintained with the appearance of three new stories in two collections: *Half an Eye*, 1937, and *People are Curious*, 1938. In the former, 'The Swimmer' is a concentrated representation of the indomitable human spirit: a group of people on shore in the midst of a storm are enthralled by the sight of a lone swimmer who, against the power of 'tumultuous' seas, struggles successfully toward the land. 'Fog' is another extension of the Stoker Bush idea with an anti-Conradian dimension. This time the helpless and inept individual is the Captain of a steamer who, rendered immobile by the knowledge that he has needlessly sunk his own ship, has to be coaxed into the lifeboat by an ordinary member of his own crew. However, the human and material processes of struggle in both stories receive that extra embellishment, which is the inspirational or metaphysical influence of the sea. The

swimmer's experience of salvation assumes an ambiguously religious connotation when light suddenly appears on the rock from which he has been taking his bearings. First one, then two lights appear,'**a manifestation as though from heaven itself**, a light bearing forward to help him' (Hanley, 1937c, p. 32, emphasis added). While the eerie opening of the second story suggests to the reader the existence of something other-worldly in the suddenness of the fog. At once both 'fantastic' and 'horrible' it is as though the fog were some ghostly bearer of the dead with an evil volition. What he asks 'had it already hidden? And those others, with whom he had eaten and slept and spoken. Where were they? The human figures. Had the fog wafted them away? Was it a fairy-tale? Just a dream?' (Ibid, p. 133).

In the latter collection, 'Seven Men' is the only sea story, yet is further evidence of a developing preoccupation. The seven men of the title are the 'dog-watch' of a tramp steamer, playing cards and discussing the 'madness' of the Captain and his First Officer, who are continually wrangling over the correctness of the ship's course. As it is steered with increasing uncertainty through a thickening darkness, the demotic speech of the men is peppered with infernal or paradisal references:

> 'Give us a bloody rest, will you, with your dark, dark? We're descending into hell, if that's what you're trying to say and can't, but hang me, how could you, for your gob's always full of hard stuff.' [54] [...]
> 'See you in Paradise, maybe' [...]
> 'We shan't see any blasted light while they keep her on this course. See? No bloody light, 'cept that shining in Heaven' (Hanley, 1938b, pp. 106, 114, 120).

Again, Hanley's officers are lacking the fortitude and competence of Conrad's, while the inhabitants of the fo'c'sle are instinctively aware of the ship's increasingly precarious plight as it veers dangerously towards the rocks. In the ensuing chaos of the wreck the seven become the victims of the officers' ineptitude. The ship is severed by the impact of the rocks and the sailors are trapped in their cramped quarters. Four of them eventually drown but three survive by the sheer strength and tenacity of Olsen, the Swede, who somehow manages to hold himself and the heads of his two failing shipmates above

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[54] Chewing-tobacco

water. Despite an 'overwhelming desire to let go' Olsen finds himself locked in a life-or-death embrace with the other two. Their salvation is dependent upon the strength of their unity, that '[t]hey were three and they were one'. When they are finally pulled to shore, the three are bound even more firmly by the life-saving necessity of the rope: the Swede 'almost covering the others with his huge body [resembling] some strange Viking guest of the sea' (Hanley, 1938b, pp. 137, 139).

That final line and the image of a modern 'Trinity' raises the question again as to Hanley's complex aesthetic. The stories and novels in this latter grouping represent a significant development. Again, there is a continuation of the material realities of working-class struggle in a language of short unembellished sentences, with occasional mutations into more 'literary' forms. Yet infiltrating that already established style is a discernible supplementary use of images from two traditions, both religious and mythical. Although Hanley often vehemently repudiates his Catholic upbringing,[55] he retains nevertheless some of its more potent imagery and in invoking the emblematic figure of the Norse seafarer produces an admixture which approaches the realm of legend. The increasing frequency in his works of a quasi-mysticism and a fondness for creating a supernatural ambience suggests that his exemplary seaman represents more than the ordinary human struggle against the material elements. Although the religiosity is reminiscent of a Melvillean, rather than of a more orthodox vision, the question turns on whether Hanley's project of emancipation is in danger of raising the sailor to a much too idealist level, thus obscuring the materialist implications of the otherwise realist writing.

The problem is compounded and not resolved in his last two novels of the sea, written during the Second World War, *The Ocean*, 1941 and *Sailor's Song*, 1943. That these novels are written out of a first-hand knowledge of hazards at sea is largely corroborated by the researches of Tony Lane, who used both Admiralty records and interviews with ex-seamen as sources for his sociological study, *The Merchant Seamen's War* (1991). Yet these two later works are remarkable precisely for the ways in which they depart from

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[55] For a discussion of those works in which he expressly does this - see Chapter 9: *Drift*, pp. 137-139, *Resurrexit Dominus* ('Sheila Moynihan'), pp. 142-145, and 'The Butterfly', Chapter 12, p. 209.

'the Real', and that is as a result of two new factors: the cultural effects of wartime regulation of the publishing industry and the further development of Hanley's 'experimental' writing. That these novels were published at all was primarily due to Hanley's opportune manipulation of the new restrictions placed on writers. The need to conserve paper and to prioritize the nation's resources meant that most publicly disseminated literature had to have a degree of use-function built into its production. Most fiction was in the form of short stories, usually in magazines, since it was maintained that service men and women had no time to read anything else, and when novels were produced, it was only after a strict vetting, based on the criterion of usefulness, by the Ministry of Supply (Hewison, 1988, p. 88). It is not surprising, then, that all four of Hanley's wartime novels were to varying degrees propagandist.

The first of these was a novel commissioned and written before the outbreak of hostilities, the third 'Furys' novel, *Our Time is Gone*, 1940. The ostensible reason for its acceptability, was that its substance and, particularly, its denouement were primarily concerned with a family's struggle and survival during the previous war. However, it was clearly the last of such novels that the exigencies of the current war would allow, since it was inordinately long for a wartime novel (550 pages) and the censor seems to have missed the distinctly anti-war passages dealing sympathetically with the tribulations of a conscientious objector (See Chapter 12, p. 208). Any subsequent works, then, needed to be shorter and more prescriptively propagandist and it was Hanley's reputation as an ex-seaman and professional writer on seafaring which enabled him to have works published whose function was both utilitarian and inspirational.[56]

The Ocean opens with a complete reversal of the former novel's more liberal sentiments, resorting to a vulgar complicity in the widespread belief that the German

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[56] Hanley reviewed travel and sea-writing for, among others, *Time & Tide* and *Life & Letters Today* from 1936-43 and was employed for a short time at the BBC during 1941-42 as a writer of propagandist plays and features (See Chapter 13, pp. 220-225). A glance through the advertised list of Faber's new fiction on the dust jacket of *The Ocean* reveals a clutch of nationalistically uplifting works, including sea and air stories written by serving officers.

Navy machine-gunned survivors of U-boat attacks[57]. Yet, apart from the inclusion of the propagandist opening, the novel and its companion piece, *Sailor's Song*, are only incidentally concerned with the war. The theme of survival in imaginative literature is particularly conducive to the morale and well-being of a nation struggling for its own existence, yet that is only the initial, pragmatic justification for Hanley's literary strategy. These later novels are created out of that same impetus towards sublimation and emancipation, which had been Hanley's continuing preoccupation in the previous decade: the war was only a contingent opportunity for further exploring these themes.

Nevertheless, at the level of incident and realistic detail both these novels are consistent with real-life conditions in the aftermath of a torpedo attack. In *The Ocean*, Michael Curtain is the only experienced seaman among five survivors from a passenger ship and it is his professional knowledge and resourcefulness alone which saves the lives of his four fellow survivors, whereas in *Sailor's Song*, the survival of the injured stoker, Manion, depends on the humane actions of his two comrades who bind him to an improvised stretcher and float him to the safety of a raft. According to Lane, the resourceful figure of Curtain was by no means exceptional. A number of survival accounts by both men and officers confess to an ignorance of handling small boats: command was often handed over to an ordinary seamen of lower rank who possessed the appropriate experience.[58] However, as Lane argues, 'the presence of a determined character was not sufficient in itself to hold a boat society together…'. Throughout his extensive research there was no evidence that 'the maintenance of society [was] dependent on the presence of the strong man of popular imagination and fiction who could, so to speak, take tigers and nature by the throat and wrestle them into submission' (Ibid, p. 253). It is Lane's thesis that the demonstration of ordinary seafarers' capacity to survive

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[57] A notion largely repudiated by Lane in his extensive survey which discovered no such incidents, although it was the case that U-Boat commanders generally did not pick up survivors (Lane, 1990, pp. 238-243).

[58] In the case of the *Arlington Court*, for instance, it was the sixteen-year-old deckboy who was the best equipped person to assume command of the boat because of his experience as 'the son of a fisherman and a childhood spent in small boats' (Lane, 1990, p. 223).

depends, not on singular ability, but on the need for 'co-operation and solidarity' (Ibid. p. 255). From this perspective, Hanley's *The Ocean* is another example of where the idea (in this case the single representative figure of the sailor) is an imaginative departure from 'the Real', since the social cohesion of the boat depends on Curtain alone, to the extent that, when he eventually falls asleep, the precarious order he has struggled to maintain collapses into violence. The second novel conforms more to actual experience, where a sense of shared commitment 'to do a duty by a shipmate' is the principle on which survival depends. Manion's life is saved by the action of his fellow survivors who undertake by turns to lie on top of his exposed body to keep him warm.[59]

Yet Hanley's principal aesthetic in these two novels relies not so much on the accuracy of its realist mode, as on two separate stylistic experiments in the representation of inner experience. In *The Ocean*, the private monologue of Curtain as he struggles to care for his fellow survivors is juxtaposed with the individual preoccupations of the others in memory, vision, hallucination and dream. For the exhausted Gaunt, the sea which bears him up is also the ever-present proximity of annihilation. He does not see Curtain administer to him the life-giving liquid, but 'only the seas that raced towards him, the seas parting and then he went down. He was spread-eagled on the ocean bed'. For him 'there was no rest and no hold. The ocean's bed gave way, and he plunged' (Hanley, 1941, pp. 21,22). *Sailor's Song*, on the other hand, confines its inner narrative to the pre-war memories and experiences of Manion, a kind of Pincher Martin *avant la lettre*. But it is also distinguished by its language, Hanley having rediscovered the rhythmic pulse of an Anglo-Saxon oral tradition to create a feeling of the diachronic persistence of the seafarer's worldview and experience. A translation of the 'The Seafarer' by Michael Alexander retains some of the metre of the Anglo-Saxon original:

/ Now come thoughts
knocking my heart / of the high waves
clashing salt-crests / I am to cross again.
Mind-lust maddens / moves as I breathe
soul to set out / seek out the way
to a far folk-land / flood-beyond

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[59] Hanley may have borrowed this idea from Tolstoy's *Master and Man*, in which a similar incident occurs. I am grateful to my colleague Nick Worrall for this information.

(*The Earliest English Poems*, 1975, p.75, phrase divisions added).

The section of *Sailor's Song*, where Manion is remembering his first experiences of the stokehold, applies a similar rhythmic pattern to create a frenzied sound picture of the relentless pressure of the physical acts of stoking and trimming:

> I filled the barrow with coal / I ran her in,
> up-kecked and heaped the stuff there / went out again.
> Saw Scruff bent to it / saw a fire door open.
> God, the heat that licked out of her / Come back once again
> Oh, how I was raging / inside me now
> (Hanley, 1943, p. 40, line changes and divisions added).

Though the mode is in conscious imitation of an ancient form, it does not signify any reversion to a static archaism but represents the development of that already established Hanleyan style which invariably gives the impression that his works have been spontaneously produced, eschewing the traditional notion that an overall formal organization is the *sine qua non* of novel construction. Alexander's description of the way in which Anglo-Saxon operates closely corresponds to Hanley's principal means of accumulating narrative tension: through a linear structuration of short sentences or phrases:

> ... the development of the thought, especially in 'The Seafarer' is ruled by a dialectic which is emotional and does not care for intellectual consistency [...] sense is not marshalled into subordinate and co-ordinate clauses, it is organised in terms of phrases which can be **delivered with attack**. (*The Earliest English Poems*, 1975, p. 66, emphasis added)

Where the antecedent of *Sailor's Song* is temporally remote, that of *The Ocean* is a little more recent. Structurally, it bears remarkable similarities to Stephen Crane's familiar account of survival at sea, 'The Open Boat', written in 1897. Crane, unlike Hanley, had been shipwrecked himself two years earlier, and his story announces from the outset its impeccable realist credentials: 'A Tale Intended to be after the fact: Being the Experience of Four Men from the Sunk Steamer *Commodore*' (Crane, 1963, p. 339). The narrative ostensibly adopts a realist style in which the voice of 'the correspondent' continually

intervenes to comment on events. However, the meaning constructed from the experience depends upon a particular symbolic code in which the malign images of nature - the 'gruesome and ominous' appearance of the gulls, the shark's fin furrowing the 'black waters' as though it 'might have been made by a monstrous knife' (pp. 342,352) - is mitigated by the simple solicitude of the seafarers for each other, where every moment of human exchange begins with an encouragement, a courtesy or an apology. The correspondent rejoices in 'the subtle brotherhood of men that was here established on the seas', marvels that four very different people could be 'friends' and celebrates the discovery of 'comradeship', which for one 'who had been taught to be cynical of men' provided 'the best experience of his life' (Ibid, pp. 343,344). Although Curtain in Hanley's *The Ocean*, might try to encourage such a sense of commonality, the degree of his success is at best tenuous. There may be structural similarities with the earlier story, but the relation to its literary model is one of dialectical opposition rather than of strict homology, so that the latter version, in the manner of *Captain Bottell*, is in the nature of a reply. Hanley's initial strategy is to reverse the proportional relation of seamen to civilians, yet there are other more significant changes which are determined by the author's fundamental conviction of the human relation to the natural world. The imagery of 'The Open Boat' is based on the privileging of human compassion and feeling over nature's indifference, whereas Hanley's narrative makes no such claims. Rather, in his version, it is consistently the natural world which takes precedence over the already compromised and degraded human domain.

Hanley's own emblematic bestiary contains both negative and positive images, and it is characteristic of his work that nothing of the former is located in the immediate environment of the sea, but emerges from the realm of the unconscious. Of the boat's four civilian occupants, it is the younger Benton who is especially prone to fearful imaginings. Dreaming of his boyhood fear of cockroaches, the insect he imagines crawling across the ceiling grows to the size of his bed: at first resembling something 'like a snake, wave-like, like a worm, twisting and turning', it mutates into a marine form with blue and grey flesh 'like a fish he once saw his father catch in the river'. Despite its monstrous proportions with columns of air blowing from its nostrils, the cockroach 'smelt like shrimps he once picked on the shore; it had a sea smell' (Hanley,

1941, p. 169). As Benton awakes, the creature of his dream has been relocated in the sea before him, transformed into a fish-like, yet inorganic shape, which he recognizes as the real-world counterpart of his nightmare image - a submarine. Yet he is soon disabused of that belief as Curtain rejoices in the wonder of its presence:

> "Lovely," he said. "Whales are lovely to look at - like children. It's playing, see! Look how the water spouts up from his snout, high into the air. You never saw a whale before - then sit down here with me and just watch. That's no submarine. A submarine wouldn't know how to play. Not like that... (Ibid, p. 171)

Whereas Crane contrasts the dispassionate presence of sea fauna with the comradely relationships of the humans, Hanley introduces the opportune appearance of the whale as an inspiring and unifying focus for an otherwise disunited and individually isolated group. That sudden and magical incarnation from the deep is in sharp contrast to the despised dream symbol of human degradation which emerges from Benton's dream. For Hanley, it is thus nature and not contemporary society which holds the key to human emancipation and redemption.

However, there is one final point at which both Crane and Hanley come together and that is at the point of rescue. As the survivors of *The Commodore* swim the last stretches of water to the shore, a figure emerges, throwing off its clothes and dashing into the surf to pull them to safety:

> He dragged ashore the cook, and then waded toward the captain; but the captain waved him away and sent him to the correspondent. He was naked - naked as a tree in winter; **but a halo was about his head and he shone like a saint**. (Crane, 1963. p. 358, emphasis added)

This kind of visionary writing comes at the climax of what has been primarily a humanist text, though its inclusion is supplementary to a repeated refrain from the correspondent in the language of predestination. If he was going to be drowned, he repeatedly asks, '"why in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was **I allowed** to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees?"' (Ibid, p. 352). In a culture whose imaginative reservoir has been for centuries constantly filled with religious imagery of one or another

kind, it is inevitable that such formulations continue to emerge even in the most decidedly realist modes. Again it is the sea which consistently attracts the idea of the numinous, particularly in the struggle to find an adequate language which will express the life-or-death tension and subsequent release in situations of extreme hazard.

Yet, as his narrative moves towards its climax, Hanley's religiosity goes beyond the merely residual to become the aesthetic dominant. While the greater part of the story has been told using Hanley's own technique of multiple viewpoint, the final chapter reverts solely to that of the elderly priest who, as the boat nears the shore, has a vision of a man standing on a rock. For Father Michaels it is a re-affirmation of the solidity of his faith while the world has been distracted by rival beliefs in the perfectibility of human society, a world which he perceives as 'riddled with belief, belief in other mouths, belief in other cries'. Above these he sees 'the rock again, rise from a sea of mouths, a man upon this rock hold still...' (Hanley, 1941, p. 261). When the figure moves and holds up a hand, the gesture produces in the priest an experience verging on the ecstatic:

> He was filled with a desire to leave the boat, to reach out and grab this hand, which he saw so clearly now, a stab of whiteness rising over seas, far-stretching grey. He thought of a hand so raised while many oceans passed, he thought of a hand that was older than the world. (Ibid, pp. 264,265)

Eventually, the apparition is displaced by the physical presence of an approaching fisherman, yet it is not sufficient to dispel the religious quality of the experience: in the eyes of the priest, his was the shape of Christ (Ibid p. 266).

Sailor's Song can be read as a complete departure from the quasi-mysticism of *The Ocean* in that it concentrates on the political and social history of the sailor as representative of working-class struggle and endurance. Yet, at the same time, the narrative trajectory is inevitably toward the making of an aesthetic which betrays an idealism in direct contradiction to the otherwise material and polemical analysis. After the eventual rescue of the sailors on the raft, Hanley provides an authorial coda in the form of a discursive gloss on the figure of Manion. As he slowly comes to consciousness aboard the rescue ship, Manion's inner dialogue addresses the question of origins:

> ... Where have you come from, sailor, from where have you come?
> Came on the back of ten thousand waves, sometimes with the sun and sometimes without the sun. Counted every one of them, ten thousand and more. Knew everyone of them, could get the feel of one coming before I saw it, got the shape and size and colour of every one of ten thousand [...]
> In the morning you will hear a cry and that is your cry come back to you from great distances, emptiness encircles emptiness. That's where I came from. (Ibid, pp. 187-189)

The lyricism of the closing pages suggests both the physical sympathy of the sailor with his medium and the recurrence of his archetypal presence throughout history: a representation of the spirit of the ancient mariner whose continual movement across seas is an expression of the timeless and the infinite. Yet an alternative discourse intervenes when his audible ramblings on the raft are interpreted to Manion by one of his fellow survivors, the younger Donnelly, whose contention is an echo of Yank's in O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*:

> Such talk, sailor, bits and ends of things, names, old ships, old times, old wars, worn-out stuff, grey times, but it don't mean anything to us. Rubbish, old, done with, over, finished. That was an old war you gabbled about and this is a brand new war, that was twenty-five years ago, but this is different, and not a grey day in it. No sir. Every day as hard and bright as steel... Rock, granite, iron steel, bone, anything like that shipmate, but all that gabbling of yours, just overflow from an old scupper. (Hanley, 1943, p. 190)

Yet Manion's metaphoric age goes beyond the temporal confines of a single human life. In the final two chapters the implicit reply to Donnelly's celebration of the new age comes in the form of an accumulation of countervailing images of greater and more valued antiquity. Manion's inner dialogue continues with the vision of himself on a raft along with millions of other rafts, on each of which is a single man, drifting toward a 'horizon of iron'. Yet this poses no threat, since it is merely the passing from one technologically determined age to another, having no essential impact on the enduring mariner. In the dream, the sailors 'were just moving over and I moved with them, and were over that line and we were in the age of iron. I never stopped moving, moved as this ocean moved' (Ibid, p. 198). The structure of feeling is similar to that of *The Ocean* in which the final movement towards closure represents an ideological shift from a

polemical and social critique to an expression of stability and continuity. Donnelly's claim for the inevitability of modernity is acknowledged, yet the sailors on the rafts are essentially survivors, vestiges of older, more enduring values. Threatened by the destructive and relativizing power of the new technological age, human beings cling to the rafts and the rocks of their ideological origins. While Hanley's wartime novels of the sea register the material effects on ordinary people of a violent and changing world, they look for permanence in, for him, the most potent expressions of communal cohesion: the iconic images of his Catholic childhood and the ancient traditions of his original calling, the sea. The implicit investment in the working class both to express and transform the social totality struggles against those images of myth and archetype which more readily accede to a bourgeois conception of an essential and unchanging human nature.

Conrad's Legacy

That conception of the sea as the repository for the values and traditions from remote antiquity, is, despite Hanley's repudiation of his predecessor, one of the key components of the Conradian aesthetic. 'If you would know the age of the earth,' Conrad premises, 'look upon the sea in a storm'. Its very appearance - 'the greyness of the whole immense surface, the wind furrows upon the faces of the waves, the great masses of foam tossed about and waving, like matted white locks, give to the sea in a gale the appearance of hoary age [...] as though it had been created before light itself' (Conrad, 1946b, p. 71). The noble and ancient lineage of seafarers is, for Conrad, their enduring value. The future ships of what Hanley describes as 'the age of iron' will not bear the same relation to its past as the 'last generation' of sailing ships does to antiquity:

> The seaman of the last generation, brought into sympathy with the caravels of ancient time by his sailing ship, their lineal descendant, cannot look upon those lumbering forms navigating the naïve seas of ancient woodcuts without a feeling of surprise, of affectionate derision, envy and admiration. For those things... were manned by men who are his direct professional ancestors. (Ibid, p. 72)

The persistent spectre of Joseph Conrad is possibly the most disabling of Hanley's cultural impediments. While Hanley is struggling to wrest his own autonomous forms of expression from the plethora of images and influences which constitute the tradition of

sea writing, there is a persistent ideological currency within English culture which continues to invest the seafaring community with all its traditional, nationalistic and conservative associations. Hanley had always been determined to challenge those dominant ideas on behalf of his class, but in the struggle to maintain both an intellectual integrity and an economically viable way of life, all kinds of rôles are assumed or commissions undertaken which problematize the position of the autonomous artist.

As earlier intimated, one of these rôles that Hanley was bound to accept was that of the professional spokesperson for the sea community, the modern successor to Conrad. As such, Hanley submitted a range of works on sea subjects to a variety of journals, magazines and publishers. A more extended discussion of Hanley's relation to his professional associates will be reserved for Chapters 8 and 9, but for the present argument it can be asserted that the more Hanley becomes involved and associates himself with the mainstream inheritors of the Conradian tradition, the more he tends to collude in their ideological position. Although he chose to live on the social margins, in his correspondence and forms of association Hanley was keen to identify with the community of his fellow-writers. Two of the contemporary writers of the sea he admired - very much different from B Traven - were H M Tomlinson and Richard Hughes. The former's close indebtedness to Conrad is recognizable, both in his fondness for the Thames on whose East London reaches he grew up, and in a taste for exotic jungle locations, which he knew, not as a professional seaman, but through his travels as a correspondent. In the latter's descriptions of a hurricane at sea, Conrad's 'Typhoon' is the obvious and acknowledged model, yet the knowledge of marine hazards is not that of a working seaman, but of someone more akin to the gentleman adventurer familiar from the vogue for literary travel writing in the 1930s.[60]

Consequently the respective narrative voices in these works adopt the position of the detached observer whose only access to the closed world of the sea-going community is through the privileged perspective of the officers. When the crewmen are represented, it

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[60] For a discussion of the trend in literary travelling see Cunningham, 1988, pp. 348-367.

is invariably through a representative type. For instance, in Tomlinson's *Gallion's Reach*, Wilson the steersman is the only characterization of an ordinary seaman, otherwise the crew are viewed collectively from a distance: even within the close proximity of a lifeboat the faces of the men are indistinct, their 'unshaved faces [...] like those of destitute but bearded children' (Tomlinson, 1952, p. 125). Hughes's only crewman in *In Hazard* - Ao Ling the Red Army infiltrator - is, similarly, the only discernible character amidst the Chinese crew who, in familiar Conradian mode, are represented as a feckless undifferentiated mass, a group which had 'gone hardly human [...] piled up like a pile of half-dead fish on a quay' (Hughes, 1992, p. 86). Consistent again with the Conradian example, it is the captains who are at the moral centre of the narratives. The significance of Captain Hale in Tomlinson's *Gallion's Reach* is revealed in the details of his cabin, 'where understandable and well-ordered objects were an assurance of continuity while all without was dark confusion...' (Tomlinson, 1952, p. 96). In an almost absurdly unnecessary gesture it is Hale who mysteriously disappears with the sinking ship, but not without that indelible impression left in his wake, his cabin exuding that 'air of sanity and composure while anarchy was at its wall' and the captain himself 'an augury of grey wisdom and the symbol of conscious control amid the welter of huge and heedless powers' (Ibid, p. 96). Captain Edwardes of Hughes's *In Hazard*, written more than a decade later, retains that patrician status still assigned to ships' masters: in the mate's estimation he is 'a good captain at most times; but under the stimulus of danger he was rather more'. He had always liked Captain Edwardes, 'but he had no idea before what a giant the man was inside' (Hughes, 1992, p. 163).

Unlike Conrad, however, these works have a characteristic in common which is a new departure for 20th century novels of the sea. Their respective narratives are clearly written from the point of view of outsiders, neither of whom has a working knowledge of ships and the sea but, nevertheless have undertaken exhaustive research: it is the position not of the professional seaman but of the fascinated tourist, the passenger or the scholar. In Tomlinson's *Gallion's Reach*, the main character is the fugitive young office worker, Colet, who is sheltered by the officers of an embarking steamer as a supernumerary 'purser' (his first novel, *The Sea & the Jungle* has a similar plot). There are no passengers on board *The Archimedes* in Hughes's *In Hazard*: the first person narrative is

from the point of view of 'the visitor', whose knowledge of the workings of the ship derives from the privileged passenger's tour and whose reliability as a narrator is guaranteed by a personal friendship with the officers. Seen from this perspective, the inheritors of Conrad's tradition correspond precisely to Hanley's criticism of him: that he was 'not a sailor, but a writer who happened to go to sea' (Hanley, 1937c, p. 16) and what they essentially inherit from his example is not so much a capacity to describe or represent what they find but a predilection to use the sea to express certain pre-conceived notions of a natural hierarchy in human society. What at first glance appears to effect a journalist's detachment, actually reproduces the characteristic Conradian partiality.

Hanley's own tendency in that direction has already been alluded to, and it can also be discerned in his often problematic attitude to sea captains and representative types of seamen who embody certain preferred virtues: dignity, sacrifice, wisdom. A number of earlier stories collected in *Half an Eye* including 'Captain Cruickshank', 'A Tale', 'The Old Ship', 'The Storm', the latter two of which border on the sentimental, give a very sympathetic view of ageing and venerable seafarers whose histories go back to the days of sail. Yet Hanley follows the established pattern more closely when he has to conform to the popular notion of what constitutes a 'writer of the sea' and step outside of his novelist's calling to become 'the expert', one who interprets the seafaring community to the lay reader. The only book-length work he produced in this mode was that commissioned by Methuen: part reminiscence, part fiction, part handbook, a hybrid form he named *Between the Tides* (1939) in imitation of Conrad's late and critically damaging set of stories *Within the Tides*. Here, Hanley casts himself in the rôle of both guide to shipboard life and mediator of some essential meanings which are to be gained from the totality of sea experience.

At the very outset Hanley is determined to reject the conventional travel reader's view of the sea: his archetypal 'Jack', having discovered his sea legs, nevertheless soon realizes that wind and water 'have become the aiders and abetters of a dark conspiracy against him' and that 'the romance has suddenly vanished' (Hanley, 1939, p. 1). Yet the anti-romantic stance is not sustained, for it is the book's basic contradiction that it constantly attempts to repudiate the romance of the sea, but, when attempting to convey the

experience of it, is unable to escape from the conventional formulations. In this way, Hanley not only reinforces those patrician ideals of some of his *Half an Eye* collection, but even confutes the political insights of the earlier *Men in Darkness* stories reassembled in the same volume. Unlike the previous year's *Hollow Sea*, where characters are represented as complex, contradictory, morally compromised, the officers and crew are drawn according to the conventional attributes of their rank. There is none of the political force of that earlier work. Instead it is an account of a voyage of what is virtually an ideal ship, seen through a series of incidents, which offer an opportunity for the writer to reaffirm the conventional maritime virtues, along with the traditional poetic evocations of the sea.

Again, initially there is at least a determination to represent the whole of the community of *The Coresca*: implicitly refuting Conrad's officer-class world-view, the sea is represented as developing 'a communal spirit' in which 'men are held together by a common outlook and purpose' (Ibid, p. 180). Yet Hanley reserves the privileged narrative for those ordinary seamen who, like himself, have a leaning toward the solitary life: the younger venerator of traditional values, Lynch, and the veteran known as 'The Admiral'. On one of his lonely tours round the deck, the latter suddenly hears the sound of laughter coming from the captain's cabin. Identifying in the captain a kindred spirit, there is nothing more that he would have liked than to have 'crossed over to that room and shared in the laughter [...] to have sat down opposite him, this man of his own time, and swapped yarns, and talked about their ships, the far countries, the queer people, the strange sights' (Ibid, p. 161). The linking of the two human relics from the days of sail recalls a similar empathetic wisdom shared by the old salt Singleton and his captain in Conrad's *Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, and closer parallels with the Conradian paradigm emerge in the form of a neo-colonialist description of 'the East' and a diatribe on 'sea lawyers'. In the case of the former, Hanley's *Coresca* is anchored at an Eastern port, a place where 'darkened doorways invite, the lights of coffee shops wink obscenely...' and 'the notes of a musical instrument float out upon the air, sinister, barbaric' (Ibid, p. 200); where the ship is beset by 'the human debris' of the East: whores, smelly hawkers, and a disreputable merchant whom Captain Dodds is to meet. Emblematically dressed in white for the occasion, the captain tells the quartermaster to look out for 'a tall dark gentleman,

fat in the face. If he looks very suspicious that will be him' (Ibid, p. 176). Deplorable though this kind of writing might be, few writers of Hanley's generation, including anti-imperialists like Orwell and Joyce Cary, were free of the endemic racism which is a legacy of Britain's imperial past. It is, however, surprising to find Hanley equivocal on the subject of 'sea lawyers' on whose behalf, contrary to Conrad's demonization, he had been a staunch advocate. Ostensibly he is keen to put the case for their necessary function as upholders of seamen's rights, that their 'interference was a necessary virtue [and that it was] for the good of everybody that [Mr Stephens] should talk about the disgraceful conditions in which these people had to work' (Ibid, p. 190). Yet Hanley's Mr Stephens is not a positive enough character to merit any real credibility. Rather Hanley creates around him an air of ambiguity in that he is treated as a figure of fun by both the captain and the other characters on board. His complaint on behalf of the 'women coalers', furthermore, colludes in the imperialist notion that such injustices only occur at foreign seaports outside the domain of the complacent world of the ship. Finally, he is condemned to the ultimate ignominy of being the ship's bore.

Hanley concludes his ideal voyage with Lynch, back at his home port, lingering over the sight of two contrasting riverside groups: an ex-serviceman's band and a line of old salts seated on benches:

> The band is simply a noise to these old men. It is something modern. In their times things were different.
> The sailors sit silent, the ex-soldiers blow trumpets in the streets, and when they tire of blowing trumpets they put their heads into gas ovens or hang themselves in yards or closets. An old soldier with one leg cried aloud [...] about ungratefulness, but these men blow trumpets. The old sailors on the benches blow nothing but their noses, being wiser men. They understand things a little better than the vociferous soldier... (Ibid, p. 215)

Curiously, this kind of writing is in direct contrast to that in both the preceding *Hollow Sea* and the novel which follows, *Our Time is Gone*. Hanley's erstwhile anti-war stance and his compassion for the broken men of World War One have seemingly been swept away by a language of self-satisfaction and resignation. The key to an understanding of the apparent contradiction, however, lies in what the presence of the soldiers represents

in the Hanleyan world-view: the ineluctably destructive power of modernity, which is confirmed by Lynch's observation that the old men are symbols of 'an old time and an old way of life fast being sucked beneath the rushing waters of progress' (Ibid, p. 220). It is, therefore, modernity itself, not the soldiers, which is the object of Hanley's critique. The soldiers' gestures are futile because they, unlike the sailors, are, ironically, the very products of the modern world they rail against.

Whereas Hanley's gesture could be considered well-intentioned in that it adopts a characteristic irony towards the debased idea of service, the adoption of the venerable figures of the sailors is not a sufficient counter to modern barbarities, for the 'calm acquiescence' of the sailors has been gained at the expense of forgetting their own 'raw deals' of the past (Ibid, p. 217). What is of overriding importance for Hanley, however, is that the sailors are located not only at a temporal juncture of the traditional and modern worlds, but in the geographical space which is the limbo between the welcoming and natural medium of the sea and the forbidding ambience of the city:

> The city is strange behind them, the sea old and familiar before them, and they will remain anchored between the two. A step backwards is towards greater bewilderment, towards a long and unknown road; steps forward are impossible. (Ibid, p. 216)

The juxtaposition of sea and city, tradition and modernity, is the key (ironically in a book which purports to be non-fictional) to the Conradian binary oppositions constantly emerging from Hanley's fiction. Part II has tried to show how these ideas are derived not only from Hanley's experience of the sea, but from a process of socialization into the community of sea writers, which offers as available means to literary expression its own set of prioritized attitudes and values. Nonetheless, Hanley's writing owes much to a countervailing position which aligns itself with the actual community of ordinary seamen and deploys a set of images and forms of expression which are closer to his own class. The difficulties and contradictions which arise from the conjunction of these two separate strains represent nothing less than a cultural form of the class struggle, an ongoing process which, as will be further argued, permeates all areas of Hanley's life and work.

PART III: HANLEY AND MODERNISM

CHAPTER 7. THE DIALECTICS OF MODERNISM

The Modernist Project

Having investigated extensively Hanley's identity as a writer of the sea, Part III will now develop the idea of a textual class struggle in relation to Hanley's simultaneous and developing concern with the contemporary experience of the city. What will be argued, more specifically, is that the dialectical relation of class struggle as discovered in texts is more cogently realized through Hanley's intervention in the cultural phenomenon of modernism. What has hitherto been identified in his sea writing as an 'expressionist' tendency here emerges as a fully-fledged modernist technique which, in terms of its relation to the dominant cultural form, is determined by an essentially oppositional stance and an immanent social critique. Here art (or in this case literary modernism) is understood in Theodore Adorno's sense of its dual essence: as something which is both ideological through and through and at the same time, because of its autonomy, that which criticizes society in its very being (Adorno, 1984, p. 321). By that is meant that art, for its continuing existence, depends on the economic and institutional dissemination of its products, and thus preserves the status quo in its collusion with commodity fetishism. Yet because of its aesthetic identity as 'truth content' it functions as essentially autonomous from, as non-identical with, the empirically real world of commodities and thus in implicit opposition to it. Although Adorno's 'aesthetic theory' refuses the place of proletarian art within the dialectic, representing all art implicitly as inherently bourgeois or merely as good and bad, this thesis will argue that Hanley's modernist intervention affords a most apt realization of that dialectical relationship, particularly in his unique placing within the cultural realm and in his mode of representation of a particular class experience.

Hanley emerges at a particular moment in cultural history, at various nodes of conflict and interaction: where, for instance as already witnessed in his sea writing, the author's experience of modernity confronts the powerful hegemony of cultural tradition, but also where, within the process of modernism's social inception, the resistant voices of an

emergent world-view are dissipated by the ideology of the institution. What an art such as Hanley's exemplifies is the struggle of two opposing impulses: on the one hand to be accepted into the community of art which institutionally seeks to ensure its own continuity, both through its economic and its critical means of self-promotion and, on the other hand, implicitly to challenge that process which, as an ideological apparatus, is part of the 'rational' will to social domination. In its identity as commodity lies the art work's inherent function within capitalist relations of production:

> ... works of art are absolute commodities; they are social products which have discarded the illusion of being-for-society, an illusion tenaciously retained by all other commodities... Alas, even as an absolute commodity art has retained its commercial value, becoming a 'natural monopoly'... It is possible that completely non-ideological art is entirely unfeasible. Art surely does not become non-ideological just by being antithetical to empirical reality. (Adorno, 1984, p. 336)

Thus, as absolute commodities or as things in themselves, art objects are signifiers of a system whose pretension of dedication to human progress is illusory, yet Adorno's pessimism is such that for him the ideology of art imperils any other possible function. The history of Hanley's relationship to the commercial processes of fiction production - the pressures it exerts on the writing - is an empirical realization of that problem which is compounded by the fact that modern art relies for its promulgation on a critical conservatism resistant to any potential disruption to art's institutional continuity. Self-preservation is guaranteed by representing the new, in the manner of a T S Eliot, as only a slight emendation of an ongoing tradition.[61] What Adorno has to say of the philosophy of history in relation to 'the new' is equally true of literary criticism:

> ... nothing is more detrimental to a theoretical understanding of modern art than attempts to reduce it to similarities with what went before. Under the aegis of this kind of methodological *déja-vu*, modern art is assimilated into an undialectical continuum of tranquil developments while its explosive specificity is ignored... In comparing modern works of art with older ones, what should be emphasized are the differences. (Ibid, p. 28)

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[61] See, particularly, Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', 1919 (Eliot, 1949, pp. 13-22).

Thus Hanley's writing and literary career are also subject to critical pressures from a variety of political interests, all of which tend to place him within one or other school in relation to the past - the tradition of sea writing, the realism of the proletarians - thus neutralizing his modernist tendencies.

Yet, as the example of Hanley will show, the nature of social reality emerges in the dialectical relation between the form of the work of art - e.g. the bourgeois novel - and what in essence negates it, what is non-identical with it. Art as an institutional form inevitably maintains the values and the political supremacy of the dominant class. What bourgeois art always seeks, particularly through its own critical apparatus, is to subsume what is essentially other beneath its own auspices, to render it identical. Hanley's representation of the extremes of a particular class experience is an expression of the non-identical: a negation of the affirmative ideology of bourgeois society, expressing what is essentially outside itself. The 'truth content' of the work of art arises out of that which in the work is non-identical with itself, is the fundamental critique, the negation of the cultural and institutional processes which maintain the ideological nature of art. Hanley's modernism is constituted by precisely those ideological determinants necessary to any individual novelist's inception into the processes of cultural production, yet at the same time, his work expresses the fundamental realities of what bourgeois society seeks to suppress: its foundations in domination, exploitation and suffering. This section will therefore explore the dialectics of modernism through Hanley's complex relation to both the prevailing institutional and critical imperatives confronting the marginal writer and the web of interacting and conflicting claims of subjectivist insight and communal loyalties. Such a project involves an understanding of modernism both as an oppositional and as a 'culpable' movement, denouncing the irrationality of bourgeois culture, yet guiltily colluding with the forces which led to the barbarism of the Second World War (see Adorno, 1984, p. 333). It has already been seen how Hanley, in his sea writing, moves between those opposite poles of expressionism on the one hand and a latent romanticism on the other, both resisting and assenting to the traditional values of the Conradian paradigm. Now it will be shown how Hanley's dialectical relation to an institutional modernism both reaffirms its dominance and resists it through language and the 'dialogic' method.

The Dialectical Foundation

The precise nature of the oppositional or resistant impulse in modernism can be traced to the early modernists and their notion of the need for individual artistic autonomy, a protest against the growth of capitalism wherein all relations are reduced to the value of those of monetary exchange, rendering all things equivalent. It is here at the beginnings of the crisis of bourgeois culture that is to be found the initial impulse of modernism: namely to assert the private sphere of subjective experience against the dominating tendencies of objective reality, to transcend the levelling effect of the market and to restore the uniqueness of the cultural product. Signifiers of this particular form of 'modernist' sensibility are clearly present as early as 1884 in Henry James's 'The Art of Fiction' and in Conrad's introduction to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, 1897. What both James and Conrad have in common is the idea that the novel has developed beyond the diversionary and attained a new high serious and teleological function, with an attendant conviction of the privileged role of the artist, free of moral or aesthetic constraints:

> ... the good health of an art which undertakes so immediately to reproduce life must demand that it be perfectly free... The ways in which it is at liberty to accomplish this result (of interesting us) strike me as innumerable, and such as can only suffer from being marked out or fenced in by prescription. They are as various as the temperament of man, and they are successful in proportion as they reveal a particular mind, different from others [...] The advantage, the luxury, as well as the torment and responsibility of the novelist, is that there is no limit to what he may attempt as an executant - no limit to his possible experiments, efforts, discoveries, successes. (James, 1957, p. 29)

The claim that the artist as novelist is no longer bounded by convention is a clear indication of a new doctrine of artistic freedom, a consciousness of individual priorities which is further developed in Conrad's self appointed 'task' which, he tells the reader is 'by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel - it is, before all, to make you *see*' (Conrad, 1950a, p. x). The further corollary is that the artist no longer adheres primarily to the demands of the community of readership but to 'the stammerings of his conscience and to the outspoken consciousness of the difficulties of his work' (Ibid, p. xi). In that phrase lies the author's manifesto for the privileging of the monadic subject and the Conradian hero's struggle with the contradictions of the imperial condition. Yet what is also registered is another dimension to Conrad's high-cultural aspirations, that

missionary quality to his artist's vocation, which does not stay focused on the private internalized world: rather its purpose ultimately is to reach outward in a gesture of 'solidarity', expressing a Utopian faith in what 'binds together all humanity' (Conrad, 1950a, p. viii). That phrase represents as a significant afterthought the implicit recognition of the dialectical other pole of modernism, namely that, while a discursive space is created for the working out of private dilemmas, that which exists outside the subject is also necessarily registered. In Conrad's case, the idea of solidarity is precipitated in fictional form as the representation of the alienated or reified social condition, creating for its representatives a series of abstract rôles: from the repressed generalized other of imperialism (e.g. the 'cargo' of the *Patna* and the *Nan-shan*), through the idealized or demonized representatives of the working class (Singleton or Donkin respectively on the *Narcissus*), to the aestheticized enigmas of what bourgeois society refuses to confront (the 'nigger' James Wait as the brooding enigma of a universal mortality and a rehearsal for the later more developed metaphor of 'darkness'). These are just some of the ways in which the private contemplation of the individual subject always registers the 'guilt' of its abstraction from the social totality for here is that inscription of 'the social, and the very experience of class struggle' which is always present in the most private and monist of representations (Jameson, 1990, p. 129). For what constitutes modernist expression is not only that which in the face of a reified social reality is subjectively asserted, but what implicitly lies outside art's restricted area of distribution. This is the dialectical relation which Adorno represents in terms of art's 'culpability', the implicit realization in modernism of "the sheer guilt of Art in a class society, art as a luxury and class privilege' (Jameson, 1990, p. 130).

The argument is more extensively developed, as Jameson asserts, in Adorno and Horkheimer's metaphor taken from *The Odyssey* in which the working class - the deafened oarsmen - and bourgeois humanity - the bound Odysseus - are mutually condemned to the stasis of domination which is the division of labour (Ibid, pp. 127-154, Adorno & Horkheimer, 1995, p. 34). The working class in their reified state are confined to a fundamental sustaining praxis, excluded from art's appreciation (being deaf to the Sirens' song) while the bourgeoisie is condemned to contemplation only, thus articulating art's impotence. Yet to read such a relation dialectically is to realize that the image

expresses both domination and progress - the twin poles or consequences of enlightenment and, in terms of modernism, both social privilege and the external social conditions which guarantee its continuity. Whether or not such a metaphor is adequate to all relations between art and class, it remains a cogent reminder of a process, whereby a whole realm of the social totality is excluded, namely the class that has been produced by capitalism, yet which in modernist forms of representation retains such a powerful presence.

Ironically, in practice, Conrad was to discover that his Nietzschean doctrine of the artist as hero failed to reach out to the wider community of humanity and had to trim itself to the demands of a third component in the aesthetic equation: that of the market.[62] While his reputation in part derives from a monist interpretation of his writer's manifesto, the wider readership was created out of artistic compromises:

> In Conrad we can sense the emergence not merely of what will be contemporary modernism (itself now become a literary institution), but also, still tangibly juxtaposed with it, of what will variously be called popular culture or mass culture, the commercialized cultural discourse of what, in late capitalism, is often described as a media society. (Jameson, 1989, p. 206)

On the other hand, readers of a more 'modernist' sensibility who potentially shared the Conradian values beyond the vulgarly melodramatic and imperialist were exemplified by a small elite circle - Ford Madox Hueffer, R B Cunningham-Grahame, Edward Garnett et al - whose fictional counterparts constitute that group of professionals whom Marlow beguiles with his storytelling on the deck of *The Nellie*. However, although the establishment of a literary avant-garde ostensibly depends on the discerning abilities of a côterie of readers, always necessarily present are those factors which gesture beyond,

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[62] See Cedric Watts who traces the history of Conrad's relationship with J B Pinker, the literary agent, during which time the author's writing branched into two distinct styles: on the one hand, a continuation of the high serious tone of the earlier novels, serialized in the more literary periodicals and in such works as *Nostromo* and, on the other hand, the new populism evident in, for instance, *The Mirror of the Sea*. The suggestion is that, whereas Pinker saved Conrad from financial ruin, the ultimate effect on Conrad of his popularity was that he produced towards the end of his writing career a series of not so worthy romances, beginning with *Chance*, 1914 - aimed at a supposed female readership - and ending with *The Rover*, 1919 (Watts, 1989, pp. 114-130).

to the perceived need for greater social transformation. The Conradian principle of 'solidarity' exemplified in his 'brotherhood of the sea' and even the practical need for economic viability undermine in every sense any pretensions to exclusivity.[63] While there is a tendency, therefore, in modernist writing to privilege the individual will to isolation, to represent the self as socially transcendent, there is also a consciousness of regret, of nostalgia for what, in the difficulty of crisis, in the struggle for truth, has been painfully suppressed, not entirely forsaken or denied. At the level of the text, that process of struggle continues as the diverse culture of the twentieth century establishes itself. For Hanley and his contemporaries who begin to write in the wake of modernism, its primary tendencies make themselves felt, not simply as culturally dominant but as complex and contradictory ideological components.

The Critical Context

As already indicated, one of those ideological components is the concomitant critical and institutional apparatus which has gradually assembled as modernism developed. Its effect over the course of the first fifty years of the century has been a whittling away of the explosive impact and challenging nature of modernism, until the movement itself has become an institution (see again Jameson, 1989, p. 206). Principally that transformation was achieved by the conjoining of the commercial and the academic branches of a critical conservativism yet, ironically, it was also in part due to a general perception from the Left that modernism was irredeemably bourgeois, a factor which implicitly denies an inherent modernist dialectic. The commonest form of that denial is George Lukács's argument for an 'ideology of modernism' which also recalls the other extant Marxist

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[63] The tension between social exclusion and inclusion is widespread in modernism. See, for example the works of Woolf, Lawrence, and Joyce: in Woolf it is that between her côteries of intellectuals and the class on which they depend (particularly in *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*); in Lawrence it is between the idea of community (see his 'Study of Thomas Hardy', Lawrence, 1936, pp. 439-40), the desire for 'a wholeness to humanity' and the countervailing will to be 'separate', to achieve a 'gem-like singleness' (Lawrence, 1968, p. 29, see also Williams, 1987, pp. 182-184); while in Joyce it is between the wider inter-related networks of Bloom's circle of acquaintances and the will to social isolation of Stephen Dedalus.

interpretations of literature in the 1930s.[64] It is their common conviction that those cultural forms which emphasize the fragmentation of the social totality are counter-revolutionary and reactionary. Rather, any dialectical relation is located within the binary opposition of modernism to the preferred form which immediately preceded it - i.e. 19th-century realism - and not within the form itself as Adorno and the Frankfurt school conceived it.[65] Yet to represent the modernist practitioners simply in terms of an opposed ontological orientation to realism is to conflate 'ideology' with definition, drawing an absolutist conclusion from what is only one of their tendencies, not justifiably a single determining characteristic.

A more plausible ideology of modernism is to be discerned not so much in the modernist practitioners but in the critical practice of their Western institutional apologists. Lukács's essay on modernism (published in 1955) comes at the moment of the consolidation of 'modernist' as the criterion for literary value in the recently extended academic courses in literature. Modernism had finally achieved a certain currency and acceptance after a long process of critical argument over form in the modern novel.[66] Lionel Trilling, Harry Levin, Richard Ellmann and Hugh Kenner in the United States and Stephen Spender and Frank Kermode in Britain were part of a growing focus of interest within post-war criticism attempting the paradoxical task of formulating a uniform definition out of a heterogeneous phenomenon and responding to student demands to

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[64] See for example Christopher Caudwell's scathing attacks on Lawrence and Freud in *Studies in a Dying Culture*, 1938 (Caudwell, 1948, pp. 44-72, 158-192).

[65] For Lukács realism guarantees the world-view of 'man' as a 'social animal' whereas:

> The ontological view governing the image of man in the work of leading modernist writers is the exact opposite of this. Man for these writers, is by nature solitary, asocial, unable to enter into relationships with other human beings. (Lukács, 1963, p. 20)

[66] It was a process in which few references to 'modernism' were made in the contemporary critical literature - notably as early as R.A. Scott-James's, *Modernism and Romance*, 1908 and again in Robert Graves and Laura Riding's *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, 1927.

address the 'contemporary'.[67] What emerges is not any definition which itself radically challenges existing critical values, but a set of formulations which seek to extend the canon in terms of the academy's own self-proclaimed specialism: namely that literature can only be fully understood by the application of a specifically literary way of knowing. Without adhering strictly to the Lukácsian advocacy of asociality, the following delineation of a critical ideology will, nevertheless, argue that its dominant tendency or effect is to reduce the sociality of modernism to the primacy of individual struggle, requiring a 'personal evaluative response' (Williams, 1979, p. 189). 'The ideology of modernism' is realized, then, not so much in a set of formal strategies, but in the values and aesthetics of what initially assembled its disparities into a unitary formation: bourgeois criticism, the force of which has been the gradual assimilation of modernism's more radical and disruptive elements into the dominant critical paradigm.

That will to identity is precisely the social implication of modernist criticism for it, too, is subject to the same law of dialectics as that which it aims to interpret. Whereas a concentration on subjectivity was the immediately discerned focus in modern writing, the growing body of criticism influenced by modernist pronouncements was forming itself into the 'imagined community' of modernism's object. That is to say that at the same time as a new critical awareness discovers the prevalence of the psychological and the feeling subject, a social telos for the latter emerges in various forms of conceived relations to a remote past. In the former, an aesthetic is being formulated which foregrounds the poetic and linguistic techniques of immediacy, a kind of intellectual irrationalism, while in the latter literature is being proposed as the rational guarantee of social and cultural continuity. Modernist criticism, therefore, whether or not it is exclusively concerned with modern writing, is creating an hermetic system of cultural evaluation whereby bourgeois art perpetuates the enclosed world of its own self-preoccupations.

This is why the dominant model of modernism still relies on a perception of its social egregiousness and its exclusivity, a way of seeing which is neither inherent nor inevitable

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[67] See Lionel Trilling, 'On the Teaching of Modern Literature', 1961 (Trilling, 1967, pp 21-22).

but, rather, is part of a social project to maintain 'literature' as a prerogative of bourgeois thought. This argument follows Adorno and Horkheimer, and Georg Lukács in their respective representations of the inevitable tendency within bourgeois culture towards abstraction, a tendency which precludes a realization of the precise nature of the Real and of the social totality. To understand how that emerges as a cultural dominant it will again be useful to have recourse to Fredric Jameson and his discussion of Conrad's modernism. According to Jameson, Conrad's 'stylistic production' relies on an '*aestheticizing strategy* [...] which, for whatever reason, seeks to recode or rewrite the world and its own data in terms of **perception** as a semi-autonomous activity' (Jameson, 1989, p. 230 emphasis added). It is Conrad, particularly, who discloses the developing aesthetic dominant of modernism which is fixated on 'sensory abstraction':

> Fiction - if it at all aspires to be art - appeals to temperament... Such an appeal to be effective must be an **impression** conveyed through the senses; and, in fact, it cannot be made in any other way, because temperament, whether individual or collective, is not amenable to persuasion. (Conrad, 1950a, p. ix, emphasis added)[68]

Such a poetics of sensibility is further consolidated in Conrad's fiction:

> The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be excepted), and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, **enveloping** the tale which brought it out as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these **misty halos** that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine. (Conrad, 1946b, p. 48, emphases added)

Marlow's testimony in *Heart of Darkness* makes the distinction between traditional

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[68] A possible source for this conviction is Conrad's mentor, Henry James, who defined the novel as 'a direct **impression** of life', a constitutive value 'which is greater or less according to the intensity of the **impression**' (James, 1957, p. 29, emphasis added). To transform a concrete social reality into an 'impression', thus symbolically containing it within the obscured image is, as Jameson argues, one of the ideological signifiers of a 'nascent modernism' in Conrad - and, in Allon White's terms, one of the principal 'uses of obscurity' (See Jameson, 1989 pp. 210-213, and White, 1981, pp. 108-129).

storytelling and the newly developed, self-legitimating art of which he is the medium.[69] The new 'impressionist' aesthetic of Conrad and his successors represents a conception of both the possibilities and the proper function of fiction: that the representation of reality no longer need rely on the conventional methods of 'realism' and its rational forms of discourse, but rather a closer 'mimesis' of the lived experience is achieved by the immediate poetic stimulation of the senses: by what is felt, rather than through what is discursively argued.

If, then, a dialectical reading of literary modernism refutes Lukács's contention that the 'ideology of modernism' can be reduced to an 'ontology' of human beings as ultimately isolated, one common ideological factor can be seen to be emerging in the realm of the aesthetic. Art, in the form of the novel, is assuming a new dominant value and becoming the privileged epistemological mode, whereby all knowable human truths can be discovered.[70] The paradox of that claim, however, is that the conceptual methods of the traditional novel, which have not disappeared in literary modernism, are being suppressed and superseded by a new critical value which favours the perceptual method of sense stimulation, thus eliding the priority of knowability in the rational and intellectual processes. Such a conception of the literary, of course, derives from the recent recognition of the psychological determinants in human behaviour and the re-discovery of the primitive and 'Dionysiac' components of experience, where emphasis is laid on the felt, the non-cognitive functions: what Adorno calls 'sensuous immediacy' (Adorno, 1984, p. 132).

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[69] This consciousness of the sensory effectivity of modernist art was also developed in Virginia Woolf, in her notion that it was the task of the novelist to convey the complexity of life, defined as 'a **luminous halo**, a semi-transparent **envelope** surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.' (Woolf, 1988, p. 33 emphasis added). See also Lawrence's conviction that, against the emergent idea that photography and the movies were the privileged means of rendering 'life', it was, on the contrary, the new 'non-representational art' that was uniquely capable of revealing the essential relation 'between man and his circumambient universe' (Lawrence, 1936, p. 527).

[70] See again D H Lawrence 'The novel is the highest example of subtle inter-relatedness that man has discovered' (Lawrence, 1936, p. 528), the sublimation of the novel as 'Art'- similarly propounded by Conrad and Woolf - as a medium of consciousness superior to the discourses of science, philosophy, and religion.

Although a whole variety of literary forms were proliferating during the first decades of the century, the concomitant criticism was adjusting itself to the new poetics of sensibility and its effective dissemination was being provided by the influential 'little magazines'. John Middleton Murry writing in *The Athenaeum* argues that the novels of the contemporary 'masters' commonly 'lay stress solely on the **immediate nature of style**; they all reduce the element of art or artifice to nothingness [...] Feel, see, they say with one voice, and the rest shall be added unto you' (Murry, 1922, pp. 14,15).[71] Style, as Murry goes on to say, is that which renders necessary the inextricability of the 'originating emotion' from the means of its communication. Any contemplative experience is necessarily conveyed through the poetical method of the 'sensuous experience' which is the prerogative of 'novelists and poets...[who] do not really have ideas at all, they have perceptions, intuitions, emotional convictions' (Ibid pp. 33, 93, 6).

Such a declaration is illustrative of a widespread surrender to what Adorno calls the 'irresistibility of modernism', and to what De Man similarly describes as 'this temptation of literature to fulfil itself in a single moment': the 'temptation of immediacy' which is 'constitutive of a literary consciousness' (De Man, 1993, p. 152).[72] That temptation arose out of modern criticism's need to establish interpretative tools appropriate to the new forms, and to construct a critical consensus out of the incipient signifiers of a modernist 'structure of feeling'. If the phenomenon of modern fiction refused all traditional means of interpretation, then there was a growing critical conviction that poetry provided a close analogy to its mode of representation. A 'poetic' approach to literature was the common component in the work of F R Leavis and C H Rickword in *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, 1925-7. In retrospect Leavis believed that Rickword had done much to establish a '*locus classicus*' for novel criticism, based on I A Richards's recently established, poetically inspired literary 'principles' (Leavis, 1933, pp. 16,17). Rickword's focus was again on 'the new "subjective" novelists' and their concentration

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[71] *The Athenaeum* was edited by Murry from 1919-21. He founded *The Adelphi* in 1923.

[72] It also provides an opportunity for literary criticism to avoid any detailed interpretation of modernism's obscurities, the difficulty of which still remains an embarrassment.

on 'the poetic properties of words [...] and the exploitation of the emotive powers of language used to evoke concrete imagery and sensation' (Ibid, p. 32).

The traditional function of language to mediate a conventional 'signified' is here displaced in favour of the 'signifier' or image, foregrounding the semiotic possibilities of a more consciously literary means of communication. Although the implication for literature of Saussurian linguistics was not realized in Western criticism till the 1960s, its appearance (1915) was coincident with other behavioral theories in the social sciences. Richards's semantic/ psychological methodology proposed a scientific model for the way in which visual sensations lead to intellectual conceptions. The understanding of literary works is directly explained by a psychology of perception which hypothesizes a 'pre-existing systematic structure of the mind' (Richards, 1960, p. 124). His contention that 'signs' are inherently systematic, that they depend for their meaning 'not on themselves alone but upon the other impressions which have co-operated with them in the past' (Ibid p. 90) has some parallels with the Saussurian theory of sign systems, yet it differs in its assertion that poetic language has the unique property of being able to convey 'value' by modifying those mental structures to produce new 'attitudes' (Richards, Ibid, pp. 124-133). Literature and the arts, therefore, play a crucial rôle in the formation of social value, an objective 'systematization' being directly derived from an array of subjective impulses.

Richards's modernist assertion of scientific principles over older philosophic and religious values was influential and 'helped to legitimate the aesthetic innovations' of the modernists (Mulhern, 1979, pp. 26,27). However, although his project was ostensibly concerned with social regeneration, its effect was the legitimation of a *sui generis* discipline in the academy and a new centrality for criticism in the re-vitalization of bourgeois thought.[73] The history of modern criticism for which Richards laid the

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[73] Hence the critical ideology of current studies in English. The criterion for inclusion in its modernist canon is that such works are either not really modernist at all, but are modern additions to the English tradition, or are illustrative of a prevalent liberalism which allows for disruptive yet isolated dissent as an homeopathic intervention in a culture of healthy continuity. See, for instance, the most widely disseminated anthology, Bradbury and McFarlane's *Modernism 1890-1930*, 1976 and still going strong,

foundation has always been subject to two kinds of pressure: to relate to the wider fields of study out of which it grew - philology, history, philosophy, exemplified by the Cambridge curriculum's 'life, literature and thought' - yet also to yield to a sense of itself as autonomous and specialized - such that 'the literary' is bracketed off, is promoted as a particular way of knowing.[74] The residue of bourgeois criticism's social concerns was maintained in various idealisms which evaluated the new always in terms of a preferred vision of a social and cultural past. Beyond Richards's proposition of a moral rôle for literature was developed the even more influential moralistic nostalgia of his pupil, F R Leavis, for the 'organic community'.[75]

However, there was also an alternative and not unrelated concentration on the importance of myth. Although Leavis was often equivocal about Eliot,[76] it was from Eliot's pronouncements as a critic, in which rôle he had the greater impact,[77] that Leavis derived his own sense of modernity and tradition. The latter's idea of continuity owes much to the former's arguments in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' and Leavis's conception of disintegration is very close to Eliot's representation of literary history as

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particularly Bradbury & McFarlane's 'The Name and Nature of Modernism', McFarlane's 'The Mind of Modernism' whose primary concern is to represent the various explosive elements in terms of a 'transitional' crisis before 'the inauguration of a wholly new "civilisational phase"' (Bradbury & McFarlane, 1985, pp. 47, 93).

[74] See p. 120 above and also Brian Doyle's argument that English Literature as a discipline 'emerged as an autonomous academic domain almost exclusively concerned with the study of its own texts' (Doyle, 1982, p. 28).

[75] This was of course the ideological project of the journal *Scrutiny* (1932 - 1953) in which a nostalgia for a pre-industrial age favoured a literary tradition of works which 'derived their strength from the resources of a vital popular speech rooted in a stable and homogeneous social life' (Mulhern, 1979, p. 57). By contrast modern writing was symptomatic of the dissociations and discontinuities of industrialism and indicative of 'disintegration', as Leavis says of *Ulysses* (Leavis, 1960, p. 26).

[76] Together with Joyce, as Leavis maintained, he exerted a 'regrettable' influence over some later versions of modernism (Ibid, p. 26).

[77] Eliot's formidable essays were published in the most influential journals of the day, notably in the *Times Literary Supplement*, *The Athenaeum*, *Art and Letters*, *The Egoist* and *The Dial* (U.S) before he founded his own magazine, *The Criterion* which he edited for its complete run from October 1922 till January 1939.

a long fall from the 17th century, since when 'a dissociation of sensibility set in from which we have never recovered' (Eliot, 1949, p. 288). However, the fundamental difference between the two critical orientations was that Leavis's concerns were both nationally and materially focused,[78] while Eliot's were more abstractly concerned with 'mind or sensibility' (Baldick, 1983, pp. 176,177). As a consequence, the latter conceives English literature to be more broadly related to a European cultural heritage and identifies in Joyce's *Ulysses* a closely analogous method to his own in writing *The Waste Land*:

> In using myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him [...] It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history[...] It is, I seriously believe, a step toward making the modern world possible for art [...]. (Eliot, 1986, p. 271)

Out of all the possible interpretations of Joyce's diverse modernism, it is characteristic of Eliot to lay stress on a monist function of myth: to contain within a single image the fragmentary and disparate components of the modern condition. Hidden within that exhortation is a desire for the dispassionate order of a remote past - circumventing in a cyclical trope the historical determinants of modernity, too disturbing to contemplate. Such a strategy at the same time encourages and legitimates bourgeois culture's own insularity, so that the social telos of literature becomes inverted - not art for the modern world but 'the modern world [...] for art'.

Eliot's desire for a cultural order which symbolically unites a disintegrating modern world was shared by others who saw in Joyce a capacity to unify the alienated realms of contemporary experience. C H Rickword, for instance, identified the emergence of subjectivity in the modern novel as evidence of a steady evolution from the relatively limited forms of epic, through the 'partiality' of realism and finally on to the more comprehensive picture provided by Joyce, who 'regarding with an equal eye the response

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[78] See Leavis and Thompson, 1964, pp. 67-92 for the founding principles of *Scrutiny*'s specifically English organicism, rooted in the skills-based rurality of George Sturt's *Change in the Village*, 1912 and (as George Bourne) *The Wheelwright's Shop*, 1923.

both to the external and internal stresses [...] is able to compel both into the same perspective and so set in motion events that, occurring simultaneously on both planes, are in themselves adequate and self-sufficient' (Rickword, C H, 1933, p. 43). Both Rickword and Eliot identify in Joyce's fiction a formal containment of contradictory material, so that authorial design or 'perspective' assumes a reconciling or totalizing function. However, as Adorno asserts:

> Antagonisms that are unresolved in reality are immune to imaginary resolution as well; indeed they haunt the imagination, manifesting themselves as aesthetic inconsistencies. (Adorno, 1984, p. 242)

Although myth might provide a holistic paradigm, it is only in an imaginary sense able to resolve modernity's contradictions, while Rickword's conception of a unifying 'perspective' still maintains an absolute division between inner and outer. What bourgeois notions of a totality ignore is the dialectical relation within literary texts between the subjective and the objective realms: ' a 'reciprocal relation' where the two are held in a 'precarious balance', but where the primacy of the object is guaranteed only through the inherent sociality of the subject (see Ibid, pp. 238-243).

Ironically that essential 'diremption' between subject and object is also maintained by many of the dissenting voices - principally from the Left - in the Joycean criticism of the period and it is those Marxist critics associated with *Left Review* who principally emphasize the disintegrating tendencies of the new modernist forms. Although the journal's primary political aim was broadly anti-Fascist as part of the British wing of the Popular Front movement, its pages were dominated by the leading Marxist critics such as Ralph Fox, Alick West, Montagu Slater, Jack Lindsay, as well as one of its editors, Edgell Rickword[79]. Although their literary interpretations did not always coincide, there was a broad consensus as to the significance of form. The journal's emphasis on the utility of art in a revolutionary cause meant that, whatever the diversity of literary forms,

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[79] Edgell Rickword (the cousin of C H) had edited *The Calendar of Modern Letters* for its entire duration. He was a founder of *Left Review* (1934-1938) and its sole editor for a period of eighteen months from 1936-1937.

it was a work's closeness to social reality, its realism, which was the principle criterion for its acceptability. The fundamental differences between the bourgeois and the revolutionary positions on form can be gauged from some contemporary interpretations of Henry Fielding and Joyce. C. H. Rickword, again in 'A Note on Fiction' observes that Fielding, despite giving an impression that the 'whole of life' was the material for his art, lacks a sufficient 'individual sensibility' and considers the primacy of a 'social' attitude to be a major 'weakness' (Rickword, pp. 39, 40). For a Marxist critic such as Ralph Fox, on the other hand, Fielding's is a model of writing to be emulated because of its social inclusiveness:

> When the novelist again accepts Fielding's view of his functions, we shall have a new realism... Today penetration into the essential differences must mean the revelation of those contradictions which are the motive forces of human actions, both the inner contradictions in a man's character and those external contradictions with which they are inextricably connected. (Fox, 1937, p. 104)

For two such opposing world-views it is interesting to note that neither denies the importance of both a subjective and objective perspective, yet the diverging orientations are, with hindsight, almost predictable. However, when it comes to Joyce, the divisions between the bourgeois and the revolutionary views of art are less clear. While, as already revealed, Rickword argues for Joyce as the culmination and resolution of fiction's formal problems, Fox identifies a disintegrating tendency. According to the latter, it is the discovery of modern psychology which has 'provided the basis for a false outlook on life which in Proust and Joyce has led to the sole aim of art being instead of the creation of human personality, the dissociation of human personality' (Ibid, p. 105). The use of Eliot's term suggests a kind of critical myopia when it comes to the issue of form, where the dialectic is applied externally to formal difference and not to the internal dynamics of literary works. Alick West is more generous, recognising initially in *Ulysses* a new vision of a social totality arising out of its formal innovations. For West, 'reality, as expressed through [Joyce's] technique [...] is the sum of all social relations, whether directly connected or not' (West, 1975, p. 118). Yet it is the very 'style' of the work which ultimately for West is the problem, since its consequences lead to a social and political stasis. In the words of West, the 'sovereign importance of the verbal phrase is in

contradiction to the life of the book. For it implies that the fabric is stable, and that its surface can be decorated with the most subtle intricacy, like the Book of Kells...'(Ibid, p. 127).

The bourgeois tendency seeks to resolve and harmonize the social difficulties and incompatibilities represented in literary discourse, whereas the revolutionary world-view is keen to emphasize the conflictual, the motivating energies arising out of essential contradictions. Each identifies the other as diverging from an idealized totality, a divergence whose effect is partial or disintegrating: the one tends to privilege the subjective method and new linguistic insights as formal innovation, while the other identifies that kind of emphasis as a denial of humanity's social being. The 1930s critical debate tends to have concentrated on these essential divisions, resulting in a polarity along the realist/modernist axis. Yet this is precisely the false dichotomy which is the foundation of a later more developed ideology: the divergent positions on modernism between, on the one hand, its bourgeois apologists who propound the paradox of 'a modern tradition',[80] and, on the other hand, the equally disabling interpretation which, like Lukács, tends to dismiss modernism on the grounds of its 'asocial' subjectivity. What both positions elide, however is the dialectic of modernism: whereby its inherent subjectivism is rendered objective by the social nature of the inner dialogue and the will to resolution is subverted by a countervailing disintegration. Such a position argues for a more complex interpretation of the modernist aesthetic, which avoids the ideological impasse. If the dominant modernist tendency - both artistic and critical - was towards abstraction and harmonization, then there were counter-moves on the part of Hanley and others towards a more concrete concentration on the refracting and disintegrating image: an expressionist rather than an impressionist aesthetic, maintaining against the critical dominance of the feeling subject, of the unmediated impression, the primacy of the social

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[80] See, for instance, post-war critical works which place the modernist phenomenon within a cultural continuum. Although differently inflected (Leavis and Spender seemingly diametrically opposed) all seek to recover in their respective ways the idea of tradition: e.g. F R Leavis, 'Lawrence & Tradition: *The Rainbow'* (Leavis, 1955); Stephen Spender's notion of 'the revolutionary concept of tradition' (Spender, 1963); Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson's 'modern tradition' (Ellmann, 1965); and Malcolm Bradbury's 'The Making of the Modern Tradition' (Bradbury, 1971).

image through its subjective expression. What will now be examined is a radically alternative set of cultural and institutional contexts for Hanley's modernism, broadening the discursive field to embrace both contemporaries and older influences. Such an interpretation will cut across the received bi-polar categories of conventional interpretation and restore to modernism, by means of the dialectic, its social and political function.

CHAPTER 8. MODERNISM AND COMMODITY PRODUCTION

If one classic Marxist response to modernism can be summarized in a Lukácsian repudiation, there have been other more dialectical approaches - notably in the Frankfurt school - which see a revolutionary potential within its dynamism. For Adorno and also Walter Benjamin it is modernism's embeddedness in commodity production which, paradoxically, enables it 'to speak against the very social order with which it is guiltily complicit' (Eagleton, 1990, p. 348). According to Benjamin the new technological means of cultural production removes its 'intimidatory aura' and thereby enables a democratisation of art, while Adorno argues for modernism as the new manifestation of the social functioning of the aesthetic, providing an 'aesthetic distance', where the work of art assumes 'a vantage point from which it can criticize actuality' (Bloch et al, 1990, p. 160). Such a claim for art's autonomy, an aporetic though radical refusal of its ideological complicity, provides an approximate model for the cultural situation - which is at the same time a dilemma - of Hanley and his contemporaries.

Hanley's entry into the literary world of the metropolis exemplifies the social and political contradictions of modernism's formation since, in order to gain institutional and cultural acceptance, the author is compelled to subscribe to the exchange function of the work of art: that is primarily as a commodity and only secondarily as a social or political critique. Failing to achieve acceptance by one of the mainstream or prestigious houses, many writers were resorting to alternative means of publication. During the late 1920s smaller independent presses were being established, dedicated to producing slim but well-produced and expensive volumes for the 'collector' market. Such institutions embraced a range of alternative strategies including 'large paper' and 'deluxe illustrated editions', often only available through private subscription. Inevitably, much of this material was sexually explicit and liable to fall foul of the obscenity laws then vigorously being deployed by the Home Secretary, William Joynson-Hicks.[81] Such was the fear of

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[81] Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Home Secretary 1924-29, nicknamed 'Jicks', was 'the nearest approach that the British Constitution provid[ed] to a Minister for Morals' (Collier and Lang, 1932, p. 200). The religiously-inspired campaigner and protector of public morality, was the instigator of the seizure, banning and destruction of material deemed

prosecution, that most of the major publishing houses had been practising self-censorship since 1915, when the wave of prohibitions had begun with the banning of Lawrence's *The Rainbow*. Private publication, therefore, was an established means of circumventing the rigorous English censorship laws, ever since Joyce and Lawrence had sought for alternatives when their own works had been proscribed. The success of *Ulysses* depended very much on the desire for it as a commodity generated and promoted by Sylvia Beach, its Paris publisher and Harriet Shaw Weaver, the first English publisher of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The first edition print-run of the new novel was 1000 produced for subscribers to the former's Shakespeare & Co. catalogue of expensive editions (prices ranged from 150 francs up to 350 francs for the first 100 signed copies printed on Holland paper).[82] The number of eager buyers was augmented by the latter's list of English friends and enthusiasts - including Joyce's fellow writers, readers of *The Egoist*, and the entire network of literati and privileged readers (see Ellmann, 1983, pp. 504-8). The impecunious Lawrence also had realized the benefits of this means of production for *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, emulating the examples of his friend, Norman Douglas and the notorious Frank Harris by contracting with Orioli of Florence for a 1000 print-run at £2 - doubling in price within the first three months (See Worthen, 1989, p. 144,145). The apparent paradox is that, while modernism's reputation was built on outspokenness and expressive freedom, its rise - both ideologically and aesthetically - was fostered by its very rarity and non-accessibility. While much of its critique, both implicit and explicit, was levelled at bourgeois customs and values, its continuing existence relied on the patronage of the very class it putatively undermined.[83]

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to contravene the common law of 'obscene libel' and the Obscene Publications Act (1857). Most notorious victims of his power and influence were Joyce's *Ulysses* (imported copies seized and burnt, 1923); D H Lawrence's paintings (seized and prohibited from exhibition, 1929); manuscript copies of the latter's poetry, *Pansies*, (seized in the post, 1928) and his last novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (liable to confiscation after its first foreign publication, 1928); and, most eminently, Radclyffe Hall's novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, (convicted for 'obscene libel' and all copies destroyed, 1928).

[82] In 1931, the average weekly wage of a merchant seaman was approximately 46 shillings. The cheapest 1st edition copy of *Ulysses* was 150 francs (30 shillings).

[83] Among those fortunate enough to obtain a copy of the coveted *Ulysses* were Winston Churchill (Ellmann, 1983, p. 506) and a certain senior member of the judiciary:

Lawrence, however, had ambitions which went beyond those of mere profit: he was determined, without compromising his artistic integrity, to reach beyond the small côteries of highly educated and well-placed devotees. While profiting from the expensive book trade, he nevertheless was equally condemnatory of its excesses and of the pirating of his works which raised the price beyond any reasonable level. To this end Lawrence himself arranged for a cheaper Paris edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in May 1929 (first run 3000) at 60 francs (10 shillings) which in the event proved equally lucrative, a venture which, together with his excursions into popular journalism and the publication of *Pansies*, brought him right at the end of his life, something like the popularity he desired (Worthen, 1989. pp. 152-157). His final ambition is characteristic of the cultural ambiguity inherent in modernism, which at once promotes and condemns its own lofty aspirations. Lawrence was both 'the esoteric writer who made his money from the expensive purchase, by well-off people, of signed and limited editions; and the working-class, ordinary writer who wrote for popular newspapers and who would have liked his books sold cheaply' (Ibid, p. 157).

Thus Lawrence set a precedent for those writers - mainly provincial - who were consciously his spiritual successors in the early thirties. Inspired by his example, the new generation was finding ways to exist independently and with integrity within the dissipating and relativizing cultural melting-pot of London. To do so a writer necessarily depended on his or her affiliation to older values of class and community which provided a solid antipathy to the ideological flux of the metropolis, yet there were inevitable resistances to the more traditional ways, which were seen as constricting and limiting. The result was a palpable tension and struggle between old allegiances and newer ideas, compounded by the desire to be recognized, to be accepted into the more rarefied community of writers. Sharing such a set of aspirations and difficulties, a relatively small group converged on London around the late 1920s and early 1930s, including H E Bates

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One of the anomalies of the system is that, while four hundred and ninety-nine copies - every copy but one of the second printing - of *Ulysses* were seized at Folkestone and destroyed in 1923, a copy of the book was included in the catalogue of the library of Lord Birkenhead, who, as Lord Chancellor, was the chief representative of the Law in England. (Collier and Lang, 1932, p. 221)

from semi-rural Nottinghamshire, Rhys Davies from the rural/industrial borderlands of Clydach Vale; James Hanley from industrial Liverpool and the more established writers such as T F Powys from Dorset and the Irish writer, Liam O'Flaherty.

The unlikely location for their chance, infrequent meetings was The Progressive Bookshop at 68 Red Lion St, Holborn, which, like the Poetry Bookshop nearby, provided one of the central foci for recently arrived artists, revolutionaries, and literary hangers-on. The proprietors were the German anarchists, Charles (Charley) and Esther Lahr, whose network of associations and friendships embraced milieux as diverse as the metropolitan artistic avant-garde, the privileged circles of metropolitan publishing and bookselling, and the extensive network of political comradeship.[84] Such an institution was ideologically linked to modernism in that, while peddling and lending a whole range of radical books and periodicals, it also dealt in expensive editions and even had its own private printing press. Charles and Esther had impeccable revolutionary credentials: formerly activists in the British branch of the IWW and key figures in the London branch of the Communist Party, they were friends and colleagues of such figures as Eden & Cedar Paul, the translators of Marx, and the Scots poet and communist, Hugh MacDiarmid. However, Lahr also published, towards the end of its run, *The New Coterie*, which, as its title suggests, appealed to a self-consciously exclusive readership.[85] The new format did, however, make gestures towards a broader readership by the inclusion of newer writers, such as O'Flaherty as well as the now veteran D H Lawrence.

Lahr had long been an admirer of Lawrence and was able to be of considerable assistance to the author in publishing the 'unpublishable' short story *Sun* (1926) and the unexpurgated version of *Pansies* in 1929. Re-typed personally and printed by Charles, its notoriety was guaranteed by its bearing the name of P R Stephensen - producer of the

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[84] I am indebted to the historian of anarchism, David Goodway for Lahr's biographical details (Goodway, 1977, pp. 46-55).

[85] It was successor to *The Coterie*, a quarterly journal associated with the 'Imagist' branch of the literary avant-garde (Sullivan, 1986, p. 112).

now banned edition of Lawrence's paintings.[86] Although the gesture was made with the best of intentions, Lahr's fuller edition was priced at £2, four times the price of Secker's ordinary expurgated version. Lahr's involvement in alternative publishing strategies places him at the metaphorical centre of the continuing modernist dilemma, since he aided and encouraged those writers who displayed a similar anti-bourgeois outspokenness and integrity to that of Lawrence yet employed those very means which guaranteed the institutional status quo - the fetishization of the work of art as commodity.

Hanley was introduced to Lahr in March, 1930 by Eric Partridge, the New Zealand etymologist and publisher who had just published Hanley's first novel, *Drift*, for his one-man venture, Scholartis Press.[87] Hanley, since his return from the trenches, had settled into a curiously bilateral life-style, working shifts as a railway porter and the rest of the time devoting himself to a prodigious range of auto-didactic, high-cultural activities - learning the piano, regularly attending Hallé concerts in Manchester, reading voraciously and, above all, writing. After eleven years and nineteen submissions to publishers Hanley, along with other Progressive Bookshop patrons, became one of the beneficiaries of Partridge's small press encouragement of new writing. However, within the space of a year of their publication dates, several of the new contractees were to regret their hasty, yet understandable, grasp at the publishing carrot. In early 1929, Bates, still only twenty-three and with two more works pending from Cape, made 'arrangements' for Partridge to publish the novella, *Alexander* (Bates/Lahr, 1929, No. 40).[88] Yet, within a year, he

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[86] Percy Reginald Stephensen, was the communist translator of Blok, Lenin and Mayakovsky. Together with fellow Australian Jack Lindsay he founded the Fanfrolico Press (another luxury illustrated editions venture) in 1928 and edited *The London Aphrodite* (August 1928 - July 1929), a jocular antidote to the conservative J C Squire's *The London Mercury*. An offshoot of both projects was Stephensen's other limited editions company, Mandrake Press, 1929. They were friends of both Lahr and Edgell Rickword (See Hobday, 1989, pp. 111, 124, 125).

[87] Eric Partridge (1894-1979) is better known for his explorations of the suppressed and forbidden regions of the English language e.g. his *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (1938) and *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (1955).

[88] Bates's first novel, written when he was only 20 was *The Two Sisters* (1926), followed by a book of short stories, *Day's End* (1928) and *Catherine Foster* (1929). All set within what he called his 'native Neane Valley' in the rural/industrial area around

was complaining to Lahr:

> That Partridge, you see, doesn't lay eggs. He's a cock. He won't lay - not a shilling. I've bullied, and begged and blasted - but the nest remains empty. (Bates/Lahr, 1929, No. 49)[89]

The irony is that Partridge's Scholartis was never in the league of the more prestigious presses such as Lindsay's 'Fanfrolico', Francis Meynell's 'Nonesuch' or Taylor's 'Golden Cockerel', since it went bankrupt in 1931. Partridge's strategy of including new writing such as Hanley's was in emulation of the high-minded purpose of Harold Midgely Taylor's 'Golden Cockerel Press' which was founded in 1920 'to allow young writers a chance denied them by the conventional publishing world' (Cave, 1983, p. 167).[90] Yet it was also consistent with his passionate interest in popular linguistic idioms which had begun for Partridge in the First World War when he served as a private in the trenches and at Gallipoli (See Partridge, 1980, pp. 41-51).[91] Anthony Burgess captures something of that class empathy in a memorial vignette of a man who had latterly become a fellow frequenter of the London club enclaves:

Rushden, they bear traces of his early influences, mainly Chekhov and Lawrence.

[89] Similarly, Hanley often used to tell the story of how Partridge's contract had been written by hand 'on a sheet of notepaper' and had for £5 tied the author 'more or less to him in perpetuity', with no obligation to pay royalties (Moore, 1978, p. 8). Before signing with his first major house, The Bodley Head, Hanley needed to extricate himself from Scholartis. The 'preposterous' document was first condemned by the Society of Authors, who advised that it should be 'kept and framed', and eventually pronounced null and void by Hanley's solicitor (Hanley/Lane, 1930, No. 13).

[90] Not till R Gibbings took over in 1924 did the aesthetic of book production become its primary concern, from which time it was 'transformed into the principal vehicle for the renaissance of wood-engraved book illustration that took place in the years between the wars' (Ibid, p. 167).

[91] His early scholarly projects in this field were a re-print of Francis Grose's, *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785), London: Scholartis, 1927; and *Songs and Slang of the British Soldier (1914-18)*, which he edited with fellow war veteran, John Brophy (Scholartis, 1930).

> Eric was brought up in a kind of dispossessed demotic tradition which prized the speech of the people as the repository of a dour philosophy on life. [...] The downtrodden, who are the great creators of slang, hurl pithinesss and colour at poverty and oppression. Language is not, like everything else, in the hands of the haughty and educated: it is the people's property, and sometimes all they have. (Ibid, p. 28)

As Burgess later remarks of *Drift*, 'it is significant that Partridge, an outstanding scholar of the spoken word, was almost alone among publishers in seeing its merit'. Nevertheless, although Partridge may have discerned in Hanley an 'unusual ear' (Burgess, 1990, p. ix), it was the voice of censorship which spoke loudest to the former, who, when it came to the actual words, proved just as sensitive as any mainstream house, forcing Hanley to make extensive cuts to the original manuscript. (Hanley/Lahr(a), 1931, No. 9)

Hanley's difficulties with Partridge set the pattern for his chronic problematic relationships with publishers. In the meantime he still retained a naïve faith in the integrity of the established institutions. Real acceptance as an author was, for Hanley, to have his name on the spine of a novel from a major publishing firm - preferably Chatto & Windus, as he wrote to that company's Henry Raymond - yet, in the meantime along with other Lahr friends and associates, he was continually submitting stories to journals and small presses (Hanley/Raymond, 1930, No. 477). Lahr, a major dealer in small press publications, was instrumental in placing his favourite writers with suitable firms, both public and private. During the years from 1930 to 1935, Hanley was published by a number of private or small subscription presses catering for the deluxe edition market. It was a means of sustaining a measure of income during the long process of novel production, and even of boosting publicity if a small press novella or short story were to coincide with a longer work from the mainstream press.[92] Such a strategy also marks the beginnings of Hanley's relationships with a series of established writers and intellectuals

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[92] This was all the more lucrative if, as was the practice with most of the main houses, the first 100 or so print-run of a new novel was of a large-paper expensive edition, signed by the novelist, for which the royalty rate was at 15 as opposed to the normal 10%. H E Bates was very keen for Charles Lahr to issue his *Criterion* short story, 'Charlotte Esmonde' in a limited deluxe edition: 'I think you must aim at getting it out a little before my novel [the similarly named *Charlotte's Row*] - sales of one will influence sales of the other' (Bates/Lahr, 1931, No. 84).

with whom he corresponded, and who, in turn, became his staunchest supporters.

CHAPTER 9. INTELLECTUALS AND THE WORKING-CLASS WRITER

Bourgeois and Working-Class Perspectives

The German Prisoner - a single story of only 36 pages, printed on vellum and bound in red buckram - was Hanley's first venture into the luxury edition trade. Written while Hanley was lodging at the Lahr house in Muswell Hill, it did not, though printed by them, bear the Lahr's imprint of E. Archer (Esther's maiden name) like those of fellow Progressive protegés,[93] but was 'privately printed' by the author from the Lahr address at 9 Wilton Road (Hanley, 1930a, p. 1). It is clear why this strategy was adopted, since it is the first - and the most extreme - of a series of Hanley's early sexually explicit works, where sex and death are invoked in close identification. The story announces its modernism in two defiantly declarative senses: from the frontispiece, a starkly black and white engraving by Lahr's close friend, William Roberts, the former Vorticist colleague of Wyndham Lewis; and in its frankly explicit, expressionist account of sexual abuse and murder in the trenches (the only work to emerge from that short period of Hanley's war experience) (See Figure 1, p. 55). It is a curious story from one whose writer's sense of mission derives from a desire for working-class emancipation, since its two soldier protagonists from the ranks are represented as unspeakably sadistic. However, a justification for the offering of such a story is provided by the war veteran and Hanley enthusiast, Richard Aldington, in his introductory note.[94] He recommends it to a privileged readership not only for 'the force and vitality [of its] presentation of men driven to madness under the inconceivable stress of modern war', but also as necessary reading for a class who might claim, '"... we cannot sympathise with men who talk like that"':

> Well, you ought to. You were not afraid to send men to that hell, you did everything you could to get them there, and congratulated yourselves on your patriotic fervour. [...] If you were not ashamed to send men into the war, why

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[93] E.g. Rhys Davies's *The Song of Songs and Other Stories*, 1927; *Tale*, 1930; H E Bates's, *Charlotte Esmonde*, 1931, for which Bates saw possibilities on seeing the example of Hanley's *The German Prisoner* (Bates/Lahr, 24 11 1930, No. 80).

[94] Its price of 1 guinea (21 shillings) was the equivalent of roughly half a coal-miner's wage.

> should you blush to read what they said in it? Your safety, and indeed the almost more important safety of your incomes, were assured by them. (Aldington, 1930, p. 4)

The mood of anti-bourgeois defiance is characteristic of Aldington, who had only recently become 'internationally famous overnight' with his own war novel, *Death of a Hero*, 1929 (Ridgway, 1984, p. 3).[95] Part of the complexity of motivation underlying the enlistment of Aldington's 'hero', George Winterbourne, is the desire to escape the decadent and effete life of 'art for art's sake' Bohemian London, the representation of which contains some perceptive, satirical sketches of Aldington's pre-war fellow-writers, including Pound, Eliot and D H Lawrence (Ibid, p. 6). However, it is difficult to determine whether the notion of escape implies an irony or a contradiction, since George's original decision to become an artist is made in conscious and temperamental rejection of his father's generation, which, in the years immediately following the Oscar Wilde case, was encouraging through its prevailing parental and public school ethos, a 'manly' attitude and style in its young men.[96] What the unnamed officer-class narrator terms 'the hero for the age' emerges as an ambiguous figure: whereas there is unequivocal condemnation of the ubiquitous Jingoism of 1914, which heralded the War as 'a purgation from the vices supposed to be engendered by peace', or saw the need for 'a bit of blood-letting', George rejoices in the 'manhood and comradeship' of the enlisted working class (Aldington, 1984, pp. 200, 214, 258):

> For the first time since the declaration of War, Winterbourne felt almost happy. These men were men. There was something intensely masculine about them, something very pure and immensely friendly and stimulating...
> "By God!" he said to himself, "you're men, not boudoir rabbits and lounge lizards. I don't care a damn what your cause is... [but] I swear you're better than

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[95] What gives added force to Aldington's views on expressive freedom is the fact that his own publishers, Chatto & Windus, had diffidently issued his first novel with words, phrases and whole paragraphs replaced by asterisks.

[96] See Samuel Hynes, who argues that the moral climate of pre-War Britain was determined partly by a general perception of the 'degeneracy and decadence' that came in the wake of the Oscar Wilde case. There was a widespread conviction that war would bring about a purge of such influences and would even regenerate Art (Hynes, 1990, pp. 16,17).

> the women and the half-men, and by God! I swear I'll die with you rather than live in a world without you." (Ibid, pp. 253,254)

There is a suggestion here of a homosexual fascination with the physical attractions of the bodies of young soldiers, which Paul Fussell argues, is enshrined within a literary 'homoerotic tradition' going back to Whitman, adopted by A E Housman and re-emerging particularly in the First War poetry of Wilfrid Owen (see Fussell, 1977, pp. 270-309). Aldington clearly recognizes the irony implicit in an imperialist ethic which propounds the heroic and manly virtues only to invoke the very feelings it seeks to eradicate. The homoerotic undertones are evident, yet the text's enthusiasm for the working-class soldier is also commensurate with the author's anti-bourgeois endorsement of Hanley and the former's belief, announced in the preface, in 'a fundamental integrity and comradeship, without which society could not endure' (Aldington, 1984, p. 8).

The irony, however, is that Hanley's different class perspective seizes upon those rumours and intimations of closeted sexuality in wartime, and radically transforms the paradigmatic object of desire. Here is no impressionistic indulgence in the senses but a concentrated expression of the debased image. In Hanley's story two physically repellent working-class infantrymen stumble upon and torture to death a German youth, 'with a form as graceful as a young sapling... and finely moulded features' (Hanley, 1930a, p. 24). What the two soldiers emblematically enact is nothing less than the decimation of bourgeois culture. The bourgeois fear of barbarism, only metaphorically imagined in 'the hooded hordes swarming over endless plains', is here made graphically explicit (Eliot, 1975, p. 73):

> The two men now fell upon the prisoner, and with peculiar movements of the hands began to mangle the body. They worried it like mad dogs... Elston, on making contact with the youth's soft skin, became almost demented. The velvety touch of the flesh infuriated him. Perhaps it was because Nature had hewn him differently. Had denied him the young German's grace of body, the fair hair, the fine clear eyes that seemed to reflect all the beauty and music and rhythm of the Rhine. (Ibid, p. 32)

The influence of modernism on Hanley's work during the early 1930s is characteristically

paradoxical: the expressionism of *The German Prisoner* indeed provides a grim warning of the human consequences of trench warfare. Yet its refusal of the conventional meanings of either working-class heroism or bourgeois pity is in danger of colluding in the widespread fear of popular insurrection. Hanley shows here how he can easily fall prey to accusations of class betrayal when the modernist desire to speak out overrides the imperative of communal loyalty. While Hanley's public reputation putatively relies on the urge to give a 'voice' to the voiceless working class, privately he tends toward an increasingly egregious and isolated social position (Hanley, L, 1990, p. xvi). Such a desire from the cultural margins to claim the attention of a metropolitan readership, weary of literature's 'dead weight of timid conservatism and the dead-hand clutch of old ideas' (Aldington, 1930, p. 3) was already visible in the works of Hanley's contemporaries, notably Liam O'Flaherty who, as earlier suggested, was a significant Hanley precursor.

O'Flaherty, brought up in Aran Islands poverty, was also a First World War veteran and five years Hanley's senior. Although his own output makes few references to that war, his Irish Civil War stories resonate with a sense of the imminence of death. In his short story, 'Civil War', there is a suggestion, as in Hanley, that the political conflict has deteriorated into a barbaric assault on the very existence of civility and civil society. Of the two insurrectionaries awaiting death on a Dublin rooftop, it is the clerk Lieutenant Nolan, 'a slim young man of twenty-two, with his new blue suit , that he had bought specially for the rising' who is in fear of his military subordinate, Murphy - 'an enormous low-sized workman... a resolute, fanatical gunman; senseless, indomitable' (O'Flaherty, 1926, p. 52). When Dolan, in remorse at the mutual destruction, tries to frustrate Murphy's resolute last stand, the latter is exposed to rifle fire from across the street and is mortally wounded, although able to return two deadly shots before he is finally dispatched. Nolan's hope of surrender vanishes, however, with the enclosing enemy. His final appeals for clemency are ignored by two 'cruel cold faces' who, 'lips curling into a snarl and the eyes narrowing', cry 'Let's give it to the bastard.' and fire 'point-blank into his head' (Ibid, p. 62). Such revolts against the prevailing civic virtues and sensibilities occur in other O'Flaherty stories, such as 'The Terrorist' (Ibid, pp. 83-90), where a suicide bomber enters the hallowed realm of the bourgeois theatre, and it is also reminiscent of Hanley's sea story, 'Feud' (see Chapter 4, pp. 49-50) where, as in *The*

German Prisoner, the beauty and vitality of youth is snuffed out by the brute envy of the graceless and the physically coarsened.

Whereas there is a powerful sense of the desire to shock in the extreme violence of these stories, the vision of a brutalized working class invites a defensive response from a middle class in retreat from the onslaughts of modernity. That kind of 'modernism' which is both putatively cathartic and at the same time politically paralysing can, nevertheless, with a slight change of emphasis, strike at the heart of bourgeois complacency. In O'Flaherty's story, 'The Tramp' and Hanley's 'Rubbish', the emblematical figure of the underclass is pitted against the withdrawn or detached person of the bourgeois observer. O'Flaherty's eponymous son of a farm labourer openly challenges his two fellow inmates of the workhouse hospital - formerly a teacher and a solicitor's clerk - to forgo their indolence in poverty and join him on the open road. The tramp's brusque vitality and virility is an implicit condemnation of the diffidence of the professional men, since his seductive celebration of 'the sun and the earth and the sea and the rain' is finally not enough to overcome their equally strong desire for restoration to the 'respectable life' (O'Flaherty, 1993, p. 23). On the other hand, in Hanley's story, it is the tramp who is the downtrodden, the victim, not only of the indifference and 'madness that lurks beneath our feet' in cities, but also of the detached curiosity of the student of humanity (Hanley, 1931, p. 278). For the latter *flâneur* figure the tramp, for whom he buys food and drink in a cheap cocoa room, is 'interesting and no more', an abstraction which exemplifies the urban condition:

> You know there is a possibility that these people saw something in your eyes, your general appearance. Supposing they had said to themselves: 'A man! By God! The possibility of coming to that exists.'... A kind of realization that you were a warning would irritate, then finally seize them, atrophy their minds, their feelings. (Ibid, p. 278)

The effect of the young philosopher's words might in one sense be illuminating but the effect on the old man is a further deterioration of his self esteem. His final emblematic fate is to be accidentally incinerated beneath a pile of rubbish which had offered some

brief refuge from an enraged mob. Thus the bourgeois commentator's psychological version of reality has been displaced by the material horror invested in 'rubbish' as an expressionist trope, a modernist technique mobilized in the interests of a radically distinct class perspective, which, at the same time, implicitly condemns the abstractions of bourgeois analysis.

Modernism, then, as transformed by the working-class writer, becomes a galvanic force, fuelled by the released energy of social oppression. What is also produced, however, within the socio-political domain of class and family, is an energy which derives from a repressed sexuality and it is that which often creates a tension in the writing between two artistic priorities: the implicit potential for social transformation on the one hand and the perceived need for personal liberation on the other. If any one factor unites the varying modernisms of Hanley and his fellow provincials, it is surely the example of the early Lawrence, where the imperatives of class are often displaced by those of emotional catharsis. Hanley's early writing and that of his contemporaries often display that Lawrentian vitalism - emphasizing the transforming potential of the instinctual drives - but also a Joycean sexual preoccupation which can sometimes mutate into a distorted morbidity. 'A Bed of Feathers', an early story by Rhys Davies, is another narrative closely linking sexual desire and death, in which the young bride of an ageing collier comes to a sexual awakening through an infatuation with his younger brother.[97] While her body recoils from the possessive leers of the older Reuben, her incipient desire surreptitiously fixes upon the youthfully virile Emlyn. The latter, however, represents no Lawrentian embodiment of the invigorating phallus, but rather the debased agent of sexual reification:

> Unclothed, her body looked hewn out of pure hard flesh, barren of light and shade, solid flesh of marble, hard and durable. Her breasts sloped forward like cornices of white stone, her thighs were like smooth new pillars. From her head her loosened hair fell upon the polished stone of her shoulders. (Davies, 1993, p. 123)

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[97] First published in a luxury format by P R Stephensen's Mandrake Press in 1929.

Despite meeting a violent death at his brother's hands it is not Emlyn, but Rebecca who is finally the victim, caught between the righteous indignation of Reuben's religious fanaticism and Emlyn's brutalizing sexuality. What emerges here is the source of critique in much of Davies's work, which though sympathetic with working-class radicalism (Emlyn is a socialist) identifies modernity itself as the fundamental evil, for Rebecca's loss of her natural 'grace of life' and her downfall is causally related to her transportation from rural Cardiganshire to the disrupting environment of the industrialized Valley. Such a use of the objectifying metaphor - a familiar modernist technique - bears a close relation to the transformations of the German prisoner, the young lieutenant and the tramp into the reified symbol of the other. Yet, as already observed, it does not produce a consistent effect. As in Hanley, and to some extent O'Flaherty, what purports to be a radical class perspective on modernity, actually retains an affinity with the very bourgeois idealism it putatively challenges.

Hanley's *The German Prisoner* was soon followed by a companion piece - also necessarily privately published - with a similar homo-erotic theme. Again as its title suggests, *A Passion Before Death* makes that modernist connection between sex and death.[98] If formerly the trenches provided a metaphoric representation of a general morbidity, then the death cell in this latter story is reified humanity in microcosm, expressed in the figure of the occupant who 'appeared devoid of life. As though the whole body had been hewed out of granite' (Hanley, 1930b, p. 27). What re-animates and humanizes is the fierce 'passion' of the condemned man who has 'by a single stroke of fate [been] denied the consummation of his marriage' (Ibid, p. 11). Within the constricting interior of the cell - like the enclosed ambience of the fo'c'sle - the prison code which demands that 'feeling must be left outside altogether' is exploded by the

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[98] As William Faulkner, a writer whom Hanley admired (and who returned the compliment by favourable U.S reviews) announces in his own novel contemplating the after-effects of the World War:

> Sex and death: the front door and the back door of the world. How indissolubly are they associated in us! In youth they lift us out of the flesh, in old age they reduce us again to the flesh; one to fatten us, the other to flay us, for the worm. When are sexual compulsions more readily answered than in war or famine or flood or fire? (Faulkner, 1964, p. 246)

intensity of the prisoner's desire (p. 19). Uncontrollably aroused, 'all feeling concentrated between the thighs' the man is transformed into an absurdly priapic figure until compassion and the humane spirit are restored when a younger warder, Hope, joins him in the bed and 'yield[s] himself [...] like a mother suckling a child' (p. 50).

If such a story seems somewhat extreme then it surely is illustrative of that necessity for what Adorno calls 'extreme rationality' in art:

> Modern aesthetic rationality demands the utmost determinacy of artistic means, both in themselves and in terms of their function, in order that it can achieve what traditional means cannot. (Adorno, 1984, p. 51)

The ostensible irrationality of the text is made rational by a typically Adornian oxymoron. In Hanleyan terms the irrational erupts from the paralysis of an alienated and punitive social order; yet rationality is achieved in the cognitive moment - Hope's epiphanic recognition and action out of an extraordinary sense of human and class solidarity. There is, however, a sense in which such a modernist concentration on sexuality contains its own seductive power and the opposite pole of rationality's potential - to develop its own irrational regimes of domination. Whereas, in the Lawrentian sense, sexuality can be mobilized for subjective transformations against an external dominating rationality, Lawrence's own impasse in following that intellectual route (in *Women in Love*, for example) is a warning of the consequences when the sexual subject is bracketed off from the totality of social relations.

Although both *The German Prisoner* and *A Passion Before Death* are indicative of a certain tendency, they are not characteristic of the retrospective 'canon' of Hanley's work during those early years. The compulsion to represent the extremes of contemporary working-class experience dominate, yet - with the possible exception of *Boy* - the fictional expression of the sexually *outré* is confined to that small number of works in limited editions which are still only available from sources of restricted access. It is significant, however, that while they constitute ostensibly a distinct group, dependent on an identifiable sexual symbolic code, they have no egregious significance beyond the developing logic of Hanley's oeuvre. The fact of their private publication was a

temporary expedient obscuring much longer, more ambitious and heterogeneous work in progress. 'Boy' and 'Sheila Moynihan', two works which develop the earlier themes of both sexual cruelty and repression, were conceived almost simultaneously and vigorously proposed to The Bodley Head, his first mainstream publishers, as the best of his current work (Hanley/Boswell, cMay. 1931, No. 39). Nancy Cunard had introduced Hanley to Allen Lane in June 1930 and, already at the beginning of July, he was offering a rough draft of a long novel, 'The Death of Jesus' to be completed by the end of the month and promising a volume of stories 'in four days', with O'Flaherty to provide the preface (Hanley/Lane, Jun-Aug 1930, Nos. 1 -11 and Hanley/Boswell, Aug-Nov 1930, Nos. 12-25). Of the proposed short stories, he asked that both 'A Passion Before Death' and 'The German Prisoner' be included with an unspecified number of new ones, among which 'Boy' appeared as a title (Ibid, Nos, 13,14).

What then ensued was a long, though not altogether acrimonious, wrangle between Hanley and two of Lane's literary editor/directors, Lindsay Drummond and Ronald Boswell, over the language and style of 'Boy' which, during Hanley's struggle to rewrite in response to editorial demands, grew to novel length.[99] In the meantime, Hanley's favourite for the preface, O'Flaherty, failed to respond and, presumably because they were refused, the already published stories disappeared from the proposed list. Gradually, the extent of the suggested cuts to 'Boy' became intolerable for the new author who 'instinctively [felt]' they would 'ruin the artistic whole' and it was withdrawn (Hanley/Boswell, 6 2 31, Nos. 31-33). Such strength of purpose against the cultural dominance of a major institution was achievement enough; the remarkable contingent factor was that Hanley could offer so quickly a number of alternatives - 'Theresa Corby', 'Men in Darkness' - while still reporting on the progress of 'The Death of Jesus', now called 'Sheila Moynihan'. At the same time Hanley had already had accepted in principle 'John Muck', in which a genial roadsweeper turns murderer; 'Rubbish' (see above p. 147) and then submitted 'Feud', followed by the long story, 'Narrative' (see Chapter 4, p. 50) which he also had to alter extensively (Hanley/Drummond, Feb-Apr 1931, Nos.

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[99] This seriously contradicts Hanley's often quoted contention that he wrote *Boy* - which he later repudiated - in ten days for cash (see, for instance Interview with Liam Hanley, 1979; Hanley, 1953, p. 53 and repeated in Burgess, 1990, p.ix).

34-38).[100] However, what was not immediately apparent was the extent of the pressures on Hanley to be channelled in particular artistic directions according to the varying priorities of bourgeois literary value. Hanley's mentors at the time were divided into those he felt might exert the most influence and those whom he personally admired. O'Flaherty as first choice for a preface would have been a guarantee of his working-class and seaman's authenticity,[101] and Arnold Bennett as second choice would have ensured his success.[102] On the other hand, Aldington, T E Lawrence, E M Forster, and J C Powys were representative of a different sphere of influence. In their shared fascination for the working class all had encouraged Hanley's writing in his formative years: Aldington, as already witnessed, out of a sense of anti-bourgeois defiance; Lawrence and Forster, from

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[100] In his letters to various correspondents in the two years following June 1930, it emerges that Hanley claimed to be working on at least two long manuscripts at a time - 'The Death of Jesus' ('Sheila Moynihan') eventually privately printed as *Resurrexit Dominus* (London: Boriswood, 1934) and 'Men in Darkness' ('The Inferno'), apparently the early drafts for a war novel (See Bodley Head Nos. 6,12,14,23; Chatto & Windus Nos. 494, 496; Hanley/Steele, Nos. 36, 54, 55, 68; Hanley/Lahr (b) Nos. 1,5.). Also concurrent were, 'Memoirs of a Trooper' ('Narrative' or 'Secret Journey') eventually developed into *Hollow Sea* (Chatto & Windus, No. 483), and 'The Man with the Cap' (also called 'The Succubus' or 'The Whirlpool'), possible early drafts for *Ebb and Flood* (Hanley/Lahr a) 29 10 30, b) No.7; Bodley Head, Nos. 79,81). 'The Man with the Cap' is the first specific evidence in Hanley of 'a musical sense working in parallel to the literary' (Burgess, 1990, p. ix) since it was planned in three parts: 'Prelude, Chorale, Fugue' (Hanley/Boswell, 1932, No. 68).

[101] According to Lambert and Ratcliffe, 'Ronald Boswell came to represent an earnestness and a political awareness not previously notable in the firm, despite John Lane's liberal, indeed mildly radical stance' (Lambert & Ratcliffe, 1987, p. 202). Hanley would have been Lane's contribution to a growing vogue for 'proletarian writing'. Besides the already established O'Flaherty with Cape, there was Harold Heslop (Shaylor) and Frederick C Boden (Dent) both of whom were ex-miners and J C Grant (Dent) whose *The Back-to-Backs* (1930) was greatly admired by the Lahr circle. O'Flaherty had written a passionate introduction to the latter work, in which he recommends fellow Lahr associates T F Powys, Davies and Hanley as those successors of Lawrence who 'cry out against the tyranny of ugliness' (O'Flaherty, 1930, p. vii).

[102] Arnold Bennett had established a reputation as a 'maker of bestsellers' in the *Evening Standard*: 'he had only to mention a novel in his weekly article to sell an edition' (Leavis, Q D, 1979, pp. 33, 220). I am grateful to my colleague Helena Blakemore for this reference.

their then unacknowledged physical desire for the closeness of proletarian society,[103] and Powys through his more spiritually aesthetic interest in the 'poor man'.[104] Lawrence introduced his Hanley collection to Forster in Autumn 1931, when the latter was 'very struck by the whole achievement: and particularly the *Passion Before Death*' (Lawrence T E, 1938, p. 738). Forster immediately wrote in admiration and was to become a famous Hanley friend and champion (See Forster/Hanley, 1931, No. 1); Lawrence eventually provided the public endorsement of *Boy* and John Cowper Powys was the final choice to introduce the *Men in Darkness* collection.[105]

Despite that collective mobilization of bourgeois dissident support, the passage from pen to publication for the working-class writer is full of obstacles. On closer inspection, also present in Hanley's correspondence with these putatively eminent figures are suggestions of pragmatic caution: Forster's diffidence about sending proscribed material through the post (Forster/Hanley No. 6); Aldington's warning not to upset literary agents, powerful reviewers or magistrates (Aldington/ Hanley, 1930-35, Nos 1, 5, 7); Lawrence's covert advice to be wary of excessive praise (Lawrence, T E, 1938, p. 728) and finally Powys's boundless optimism, naïvely blind to the commercial and social barriers to bourgeois idealism (Powys/Hanley, 1930-40, Nos. 15, 27, 53). Yet such was Hanley's relationship with his admirers that he only heeded the seductive tones of praise, particularly from Powys, whose original approbations for *Men in Darkness* included 'Boy'

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[103] Forster's homosexuality is now well-documented (see P N Furbank's biography), and confirmed by the posthumous publication of *Maurice*: evidence for Lawrence's was first revealed by Aldington's biography (*Lawrence of Arabia*, 1955) but it is there already in Lawrence's own descriptions of Arab boys (see, for example Lawrence, T E, 1935, p. 237).

[104] The poor have a status in Powys's personal, spiritual philosophy which borders on the adulatory:

> ... the true philosopher instinctively pays homage to the unlucky poor man, knowing full well that by living so close to the life and death struggle for a bare subsistence, he shares with birds and beasts a thousand shifts and palliatives, a thousand unconscious clairvoyances and inarticulate heroisms, which have a poetry and a dignity such as nothing but that grim margin of survival that borders upon the end of man's tether has the power of bestowing. (Powys, 1930, p. 51)

[105] See Forster, 1936, pp. 62-68; Powys, J C, 1931, pp. xi-xiv.

(Hanley/Boswell, 1 11 31, No. 29):

> Every word he writes, every scene he evokes, every monstrous and tragic episode he conjures up from the nether depths carries with it a terrifying conviction... "this man knows whereof he speaks" [...] all [the stories] are touched by that mysterious power, possessed by real artists, of returning reality into something else. (Powys, 1931, p. xii);

and again from Lawrence for the 'trade edition' cover of *Boy*, eventually published by Boriswood:[106]

> *Boy* is very remarkable. Your writing is just a transparent medium, through which what you want to say slips invisibly and silently into my mind. I like that: it seems to me the essence of style. Parts of *Boy* are very painful, yet I think that your sanity and general wholesomeness stick up out of your books a mile high. (Gibbs, 1980, p. 21)

In fact, the cover testimonial is not strictly authentic. What looks like a review of *Boy*, is actually a montage by C J Greenwood of bits of Lawrence's letters to both himself and Hanley (see Lawrence T E, 1938, pp. 727, 729, 730).[107] Most of it was written in relation to Hanley's next planned novel for Lane, 'Sheila Moynihan', drafts of which Hanley had sent to both Lawrence and John Cowper Powys for approval (See also Powys/Hanley, 7 11 31, No. 5). Although Lawrence and Powys had some small reservations, what Hanley mostly received was confirmation, not only of his worth but of his method: that modernist tendency in his works which takes the reader beyond the real to the elusive 'something else'. The Bodley Head, however, did not share in the enthusiasm and, although Hanley had handed them the first draft soon after the

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[106] Boriswood Ltd was founded by T T Bond, J R T Morris and C J Greenwood in 1931. Greenwood, a friend of T E Lawrence, was an early benefactor of Hanley's when the latter first came to London in 1930. It was Greenwood, former Liverpool bookshop owner, self-styled 'socialist', 'erratic descendant of a long line of north country spendthrifts' who printed *A Passion Before Death* (and not *Resurrexit Dominus* as stated in the source) on his newly acquired hand press (Lambert and Ratcliffe, 1987, pp. 272-273, and see Gibbs, 1980, pp. 8, 38).

[107] The first of a number of duplicities which Greenwood was to perpetrate (see Chapter 12, pp. 196-199).

publication of *Men in Darkness* (September 1931), he was reluctantly still 'busy making alterations and recasting' in January 1932 (Hanley/Boswell, 1 12 32, No. 64). By the beginning of February, he had had enough, and announced that he was 'considering the possibility of annulling the present contract'; that since 'his work was of a nature that is and always must be difficult for presentation', then perhaps a firm like Boriswood would 'do it more justice' (Hanley/Boswell, 4 2 32, No. 65).[108] There was, however, another more pressing reason for Hanley's dissatisfaction: his financial indebtedness to Allen Lane himself, his agent Pinker and others for supporting his parents' chronic poverty. As Hanley repeatedly claimed, Boriswood was willing to offer him the financial security of weekly payments of £4 in advance of royalties. The Bodley Head, however, were able to use Hanley's dispute over commission with his agent, Eric Pinker, to withhold payment of royalties and the author was forced to relent (Hanley/Boswell, 3 3 32, No. 72).[109]

Representations of Sexuality

Thus Hanley was becoming acquainted with the real social and economic relations underlying the apparent liberal and humanizing facade of English publishing. The retrospective verdict on his relationship with The Bodley Head is that he was 'the difficult novelist [who was] later to prove such a trial to Allen Lane' (Lambert and Ratcliffe, 1987, p. 273), but that is only a patrician means of obscuring the working-class writer's daily struggle with the economic and cultural forms of bourgeois social domination. In this instance, Hanley's minor victory was that - amazingly - by the end of April, he was able to offer the more sober yet, in its way, equally uncompromising *Ebb and Flood* (published August 1932). By September, it had gone into its second edition, and Hanley capitalized on the company's new-found sense of sales optimism to secure the principle

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[108] Boriswood had rushed in where The Bodley Head feared to tread and issued the only complete edition of *Boy* in September, two weeks before *Men in Darkness*. The irony of Hanley's statement is that the courageous Greenwood had demurred just like Chatto had done with Aldington's *Death of Hero*. *Boy*'s auspicious debut was in a limited edition of 160 copies 'for private issue to subscribers only' and the simultaneously published 'trade edition' comprised an expurgated text with 'words, phrases and sentences [-] omitted and indicated by a row of asterisks' (Gibbs, 1980, pp. 19, 20).

[109] The son of the famous J B Pinker whom he succeeded as director on his father's death in 1922.

of weekly payments (Hanley/Boswell, Sep 1932, No. 97). More importantly, however, it gave him the confidence to reintroduce 'Sheila Moynihan' as his next novel for the Bodley Head list, providing the added testimony of Hayter Preston, the literary editor of the *Sunday Referee*:

> It is a really magnificent piece of work. The priest is about the first example of inverted psychology I have ever come across and the girl Sheila is the first <u>real</u> character you have created. This book will cause a sensation, not because of its theme, but on account of the masterly handling of it, the way you have built up step by step to that great climax. Nothing like it has been done before in English by anyone. (Preston, quoted in Hanley/Boswell, Oct 1932, No. 105)

Such praise from Preston - 'an admirer of the pre-War avant-garde to which Aldington [now also writing for the *Referee*] had belonged' - furnishes further evidence of a critical conception of Hanley's modernism (Fox, 1986, pp. 73,74). It was a characteristic that had been present as early as the first novel, *Drift* which announces its kinship to literary innovation, not only in its Joycean montage of styles but by direct reference.[110] However, despite the praise, 'Sheila Moynihan' does not represent any triumph of the modernist ethos, but testifies to the contradictions and difficulties of the latter's growing influence. If, as was earlier witnessed, the pioneers of literary modernism betray a sense of crisis in various forms of doctrinaire self-determination, then for the working-class writer who follows in its wake that crisis soon becomes all the more urgent and acute. It was H E Bates (only twenty-five and already writing scathing reviews of his older contemporaries in *Everyman* and *The New Clarion)* who noticed in the first novels of his contemporaries an excessive enthusiasm for the modernist style. Although he acknowledged that *Drift* was mostly 'admirable' he expressed an exasperation at 'young men crying to their God and enduring bed agonies à la Rhys Davies and slapping a lot of surplus soul agony and God knows what all over the place'. (Bates/Steele, 18 12 30). However, what Bates's remark fails to recognize is the necessary intensity of writing which emerges from a repressive religious ideology. Bates's more restrained style, though

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[110] One of Joe Rourke's 'mortal sins' against his family and Catholic community is to read what his father calls 'them filthy books by a scoundrel named Zola', and 'a book called "Ulysses" by a dirty renegade Irishman named Joyce', the latter of which is torn up. (Hanley, 1944a, p. 103)

it owes much to Lawrence,[111] lacks that Lawrentian energy and passion of both Rhys Davies's *The Withered Root* (1927) and Hanley's *Drift*, which use sexuality to cut through the bonds of a religiously imposed moral code. Davies shared with Lawrence both a nonconformist and a coal-mining background and this first - and indeed many of his subsequent novels - invokes a long repressed racial vitality as a modernist critique and a source of social regeneration.[112] Lawrence himself recognised in Davies a version of his own vitalism:

> 'What the Celts have to learn and cherish in themselves is that sense of mysterious magic that is born with them, [...] the dark magic that comes with the night, [...] That will shove all their chapel Nonconformity out of them.' (quoted in Davies, 1969, p. 141)

Davies's novel has its Lawrentian voice which rails at the religious revivalism in the coal-mining valleys, and at a 'Welsh' people 'alien and aloof in [their] consciousness of ancient austerity and closing [their] eyes to the new sensual world' (Davies, 1927, p. 100). For Davies that conflict of the spirit and the body is acted out in his revivalist preacher, Reuben Daniels whose suppressed sexual longing for the desirable Eirwen leads to his ultimate death. Similarly in *Drift*, Hanley's Joe Rourke intellectually rejects the absurdity of Catholic dogma yet is tormented by the consequences of his love for a prostitute:[113]

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[111] Bates's first novel, *The Two Sisters* (1926), ambitiously recalls Lawrence's original title for *The Rainbow* ('The Sisters') and rehearses some of the same themes. Yet incredibly, Bates makes no reference to Lawrence among his many mentors, but only recalls Cape's then 'reader', Edward Garnett, detecting Conrad as the primary influence (See Bates, 1971, p. 16).

[112] Davies met Lawrence through Charles Lahr who arranged for the young Welsh writer to visit the Lawrences while they were living at Bandol, Provence in late 1928 (see Davies, 1969, pp. 134-148).

[113] Coincidentally, Davies was also fascinated by prostitution: cf. *The Withered Root* in which a whore gives solace to the fugitive Reuben and *Count Your Blessings* which is set in a Cardiff brothel. Hanley, however, took issue with Davies's 'brothel scene' which gave the impression that 'prostitution [was] a good thing'. For Hanley, Kuprin's *Yama: The Pit*, had already given the lie to any such romanticization (Hanley/Steele, 1932, No. 57; Davies, 1933, pp. 120-123).

> He was alone - alone with his soul, which by turns mocked him and spurred him to be courageous. His soul which had been swirling in the abyss of desire and revolt. (Hanley, 1944a, p. 82)

Yet the Dantean image of the 'abyss' achieves in Hanley a new mobility since the text later reverses the Christian poles of damnation and exultation and invokes the urban underclass as the keepers of the vital spirit:

> ...he was one of the abyss. [...] He could feel the strength of its very soul in his blood. And he felt in that moment a pride in that he belonged to it. It was the heart from which all life was fed and sustained. It was the soul from which all drew strength. [...] The souls of the abyss were the souls who carried the torch - were the souls that held aloft the eternal flame as they sped on their way down the night of the world. (Ibid, pp. 121, 122)

However, while Joe's singular rejection negates the conventional notions of good and evil, the text is still held within the ideology of an absolutist rhetoric. Unable to transcend the binary spell, one kind of rigid dogma is displaced by another more extreme response. Joe's rejoicing in a kind of Wildean 'decadence' which goes as far as seeing 'the despised and dejected' prostitutes as 'the whole of womanhood exalted and sanctified [...] As holy as the blessed Virgin herself' is the immediate expression of what lies outside the consolations of either Catholic remorse or bourgeois sentiment: two kinds of social value which in Hanley's terms are alike in producing a paralysing stasis (Ibid, p. 120). Joe's ostensibly brutal refusal of his parents' demand for filial duty - it appears to lead to their deaths - is no conventional assertion of subjective priorities, but an individual expression of the social reality which bourgeois art can neither admit nor assimilate: its dependence on suffering. Joe's version of the Dedalian '*non serviam*' leads to no coolly logical resolution of escape but to the agonizing impasse of a personal and social limbo.

Hanley's relentless insistence on *Boy* then 'Sheila Moynihan' for his next works to be published is an indication that, in an aesthetic sense, that he was moving increasingly beyond the boundaries of conventional realism. To read *Boy* is to come close to realizing what Adorno implied by his enthusiasm for certain forms of European expressionism which 'attest[ed] more authentically to the fact that society was moving into a realm of

horror' than do the more explicit indictments of an Ibsen or a Gorky (Adorno, 1984, p. 364). It is a work that exists on that borderline between Strindberg's 'formal innovations (the dissolution of dramatic realism and the reconstruction of dream-like experiences)' and Hauptmann's naturalism (Ibid, p. 364).[114] Whereas *Boy* begins with the grim realism of Liverpool slum life, it defies any naturalist or realist expectations and, like Hauptmann's *Hannele*, 'causes faithful, naturalistic depiction to pass over into ferocious expression' (Ibid, p. 364). The notion of the abyss recurs in the 'Inferno'- like ambience of Hanley's interiors: the Liverpool slums and the dread job of 'scaling' the insides of ships' boilers, in which children take on the appearance and identity of the environment in which they work. To avoid the inevitable fate of others who had 'accepted' the indelible mark of blackness in their skin and eyes the 'boy' stows away in the ship's coal bunkers to confront a darkness of a different order (Hanley, 1990a, p. 52):[115]

> The darkness itself seemed to lift him up, to bear him unto itself until he became a part of it. A lump of coal slid down past the sleeping boy. A huge rat scurried across the pile. Darkness. Silence. (Ibid, p. 71)

The modernistic aesthetic relies upon the primacy of the sensual or felt experience but it also proposes an alternative interpretation: the 'boy' has become one, not only with the darkness, but with the very stuff which was 'the food of the ship' just as Hanley's other characters of his 'men in darkness' period have become consumed, 'used up', by the demands of the industrial machine (Ibid, p. 70).[116]

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[114] Coincidentally, Adorno's fondness for European expressionist drama was close to Hanley's youthful enthusiasms, which embraced both Strindberg and Hauptmann (cf. the former's *Dream Play* and the latter's *Hannele: A Dream Poem* - see Hanley, 1937a, p. 258).

[115] Cf. also the boy, Condron, in *Ebb and Flood*, a scaler and riveter whose careworn face is expressive of some fundamental change which overtakes the child labourer:

> [Mrs Condron] would look worried every time she saw the blackness that was encircling his eyes. It was blackness that no force of soap and water appeared to remove, a kind of brand that he carried about with him, as one carries a disease. This blackness was now a part of himself. (Hanley, 1932, p. 12)

[116] Cf. the discussion of 'The Last Voyage' in Chapter 4, p. 47.

Hanley's insistence on the horrors, the relentless cruelties of the world is again a reminder of Adorno's requirement that art should 'make use of the ugly in order to denounce the world which creates and recreates ugliness in its own image' (Adorno, 1984, p. 72). Yet Hanley's novel is not confined to the 'social ugliness' of modernity: just as in *Drift*'s beatification of the prostitute it also establishes a sense of the aesthetic through the boy's first sexual encounters at a brothel. Unlike other novels set at sea, however, it disavows any totalizing tendency which dissolves the tensions of the text's particularities in some aesthetic unity, but maintains a dialectic between ugliness and beauty. Having escaped the sordid advances of his older shipmates, Fearon is initiated into a kind of manhood, an experience which - at once both strangely vital and prophetically morbid - invokes the quality of nightmare:

> It was delirious [...] It was like the force that surrounds a flower and electrifying the surrounding air sets up a kind of exotic fever. Fearon felt something similar. He had a great desire to expand, to open and blossom like a flower [...] Something was sucking him down. The face of the smiling girl was blotted out. In its stead he saw a kind of spectre, sometimes red, sometimes white. [...] Out of the bed seemed to rise grotesque figures, eyeless, and the features were stamped with a grin, timeless, idiotic, inane, empty. (Hanley, 1990a, pp. 138, 141)

Hanley's representations of sexuality, just like those of the sea, are deeply ambivalent. Desire is invoked in a naïve almost romantic longing only to be overwhelmed by images of delirium and death, its radical other. That same sense of ambivalence is later evoked when, Fearon's erotic musings on the Arab girl - 'whose skin was like silk, with her gazelle's legs, her perfumed hair' - are abruptly displaced by the grim warnings of the quartermaster who had found the floating body of a ship's boy with 'the neck of an ale bottle sticking up his behind' (Ibid, pp. 155, 156). In the radicalism of that juxtaposition lies a modernist attempt 'to excise through the language of form the traces of affirmation characteristic [...] of social realism' (Adorno, 1984, p. 73) and a paradoxical resistance to 'the irresistibility of the beautiful':

> In untarnished beauty the recalcitrant opposite of beauty would be completely pacified; this kind of aesthetic reconciliation proves fatal for the extra-aesthetic other. (Ibid, p. 77)

The 'extra-aesthetic other' is, in the bourgeois aesthetic, what cannot be assimilated to its own sense of artistic value: what lies outside its reconciling domain. Hanley refrains from reconciliation out of loyalty to a particular working-class reality, yet what consistently extenuates his position is that latent sense of the spiritual or the romantic in his writing which is the consequence of a denied Catholicism. Written almost simultaneously with *Boy*, 'Sheila Moynihan' returns to the literary methods of *Drift* which attacked religious doctrine using religion's own symbolic and rhetorical codes. Yet, at the same time, the former struggles to create an aesthetic unity so far not achieved in either of the earlier works.

Such was Hanley's enthusiasm and determination for the new project - 'a very fine piece of work and not easy to write ... a powerful story, worthy to go to any publisher's Spring List [...] all my hopes are entered upon the appearance of that book' - that during the long negotiations to have 'Sheila Moynihan' accepted, Hanley actively cultivated the support of Ronald Boswell, with whom he shared a Liverpudlian connection, inviting him to stay at the Hanley retreat in Tynant, Merionethshire (Hanley/Boswell, Oct 1932, Nos. 105,107). After just one visit at Christmas 1932, Boswell had reassured the novelist that The Bodley Head wanted to continue publishing Hanley and that he personally was re-editing 'Sheila Moynihan' and would 'strongly recommend my partners publish the book' (Boswell/Hanley 29 12 32, No. 2). However, by the middle of January, Hanley again - as with *Boy* - withdrew the novel he considered 'too good a piece of work to cut any further'. Clearly the sticking point was the excessive concentration on what Powys described as 'all these fellows' "penises", their state, shape, that and the heroine coming up against them so very tangibly', which was reason enough in 1931 for any mainstream publisher to be cautious; yet a greater obstacle was the 'blasphemous' liability in 'the tragically close association between the ritual of suppression with the cross as its symbol and this organ of Dionysus, in which tragedy Priest and Innocent are both involved' (Powys/Hanley, 7 11 31, No. 5).

However, despite Powys's warning concerning the 'phallic passages', Hanley was determined to persevere with what was, with some obvious problems, a novel whose symbolic unity was invested in an identity of phallus and cross. He was, furthermore,

encouraged by the coincidence of a strikingly similar scene to his own in Powys's recently completed *A Glastonbury Romance* (Powys/Hanley, 7 11 31, No. 5). Both involve the impersonation of the crucified Christ: in Powys's case for the staging in Glastonbury of an 'Oberammergau Pageant'; in Hanley's an even more bizarre - and secret - enactment in a Catholic church.[117] The implication of blasphemy lies in the fact that in both novels the 'actors' collapse and begin to bleed in the ecstasy of the act. Powys's Mr Evans denies his God but later recovers, yet Hanley's erotically obsessed Priest, Fr. Hooley, dies (See Powys J C, 1955, pp 611-18 and Hanley, 1934b, pp. 242-245). Having become sexually enraged by his young servant, Sheila, whom he notices takes delight in embracing the life-sized Christ figure in his Church, Father Hooley hatches an elaborate plot to substitute his own naked body for the wooden image, in the belief that she will think it is the risen Christ (the pun very much intended).[118] It has to be said that such an absurd fantasy - 'he was a new kind of Jesus bursting with life (242); she gathered the wild shape into her hands' (245) - had it been published, would not have served Hanley's reputation well, yet some explanation as to Hanley's supreme confidence in its worth is to be found in the enthusiasm from his supporters, who are in praise both of the direction Hanley's work is taking and of the sheer temerity of his projects. The fundamental thematic structure is entirely plausible with a denouement where, as Powys told Hanley:

> ... you tend to desert natural verisimilitude and bleak realism for a symbol[ic] and mythic dimension only **remotely** possible, but at the same time extraordinarily telling and rounding off the whole tale so very well. (Powys/Hanley, 7 11 31, No. 5)

Its greater potential lies in its wedding of anti-imperial to anti-clerical themes. Sheila represents the ravished Ireland corrupted by urban English values - significantly only encountered when she enters service in Liverpool - yet redeemed by her essential identity with nature, since the eponymous innocent, initially represented as a kind of Yeatsian sexually uncorrupted free spirit, becomes a sacrifice to the 'Ocean Christ' who in his

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[117] Even though Hanley wrote to Boswell in his own defence that 'the cross scene in *Glastonbury* is far more sacrilegious than mine' (Hanley/Boswell, Oct 1932, No. 107).

[118] The final title for the privately published novel is *Resurrexit Dominus* (the Lord is risen).

association with the Fisher King or symbolic Ichthus presides over a barren coastal fishery (Ibid, p. 20). Hanley has here clearly forsaken his own symbolic language - a grafting of maritime and watery images onto the ebb and flux of city modernity - to pursue the highly developed codes of a more integrated form. Yet the whole work is marred by an over-emphasis on the immanence of both repressed and unrepressed sexual impulses in all social relations, so that its modernisms are dulled through over-use.

What has led Hanley to such modernist excesses is not entirely due to his own judgemental error for it is significant that what unites his various mentors in their praise is a willingness to urge him to venture where their more cautious feet fear to tread. It was Powys who very early recognised in Hanley that closeness to the earth's wretched which his experiences at had afforded him. When learning that Hanley had actually witnessed the bizarre fictional deaths described in his stories, he declared that he could not 'get out of my mind your having seen that stoker's death. If there's anyone dedicated to avenging those wrongs with a Pen then it's yourself' (Powys/Hanley, 7 9 31, No. 4). Similarly, Aldington when later asked to promote 'Sheila Moynihan' in the United States, despite some severe reservations, thought the novel 'good - among your best [...] a piercing through all conventional and cowardly acceptance of life to an understanding of the real motives and behaviour' (Aldington/Hanley, 8 7 35, No. 11). Yet most revealing and ironic of all is T E Lawrence's regrets about the diffidence of his own class, which is brought to light in the full context of the *Boy* cover 'quotation':

> Your sanity and general wholesomeness stick up out of your books a mile high: people with dirty patches in them skirt round them, alluding but never speaking right out. They are afraid of giving their spots away - and you can map them, just by outlining the blanks. Whereas, God almighty, you leave nothing unsaid or done, do you? I can't understand how you find brave men to publish you.
> (Lawrence T E, 1938, p. 729)

In such approbation lies the source of Hanley's enthusiasm for a particular version of modernism. In this instance a group of bourgeois dissident writers have allowed their vicarious pleasure in the experiences of the working class to override any caution which they themselves would have naturally exercised. Modernism, like any other literary style or discourse, has its limitations. Hanley's advisors, in deference to his audacity - from

their perspective, his chief merit - were unable or unwilling to recognize that Hanley was in the throes of artistic crisis and had reached the point of development where the social mission of his works was threatened by an increasing absorption in a private and inaccessible world. Ironically, the public admonition, so to speak, of such a tendency was to come in early 1935 when *Boy* was successfully prosecuted for obscene libel and became a *cause célèbre*, one of the notorious banned books of the century, and a focus for E M Forster's Civil Liberties campaign. Although he emerged relatively unscathed (the 'brave men' at Boriswood taking the full legal consequences), the whole experience was to become a source of public shame for his family and of embarrassment and irritation for the author, to the extent that he refused ever to refer to it again.[119] Hanley's high cultural ambitions in *Boy* and 'Sheila Moynihan' are an extreme example of where a notion of singular literary value is pursued at the expense of the considerations of social and communal sensibility. The world that the eponymous 'boy', Arthur Fearon, enters is one where every social formation - family, school, workplace, even that devoted to leisure - is irredeemably cruel, exploitative and uncaring; that of Sheila Moynihan, the deeply corrupting and oppressive ideology of Catholicism, which nevertheless still constituted the strongly held beliefs of Hanley's family. Whatever the literary merits or demerits of these novels, they represent a world view that is so uncompromising that it denies the virtue, or progressive potential, of any form of communal life. While the critical ideology of modernism places a high cultural value on individualism, Hanley's pursuit of a monist aesthetic was in danger of placing him at odds with the very class on behalf of which he claimed to speak.

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[119] The literary exception to his determined silence was a single testimonial, 'Oddfish' in which Hanley relates how he 'overheard' the story which he later expanded into *Boy* (Hanley, 1953, pp. 49-53).

CHAPTER 10. LANGUAGE AND THE WORKING CLASS

The Dialogic Working-Class Novel

Despite the problems of 'Sheila Moynihan' and *Boy*, there were other aesthetic factors and influences which were already leading Hanley in other directions. The artistic impasse of 'Sheila Moynihan' constituted only one, aggressively 'monological' aspect of his diverse forms of literary engagement and a style more consistent with his later development was emerging which explores a more open, indeed more 'dialogical' mode. The introduction here of a terminology taken from the work of the Bakhtin school is not intended to supersede or displace that of Adorno. Indeed, what is offered is a theoretical expansion from an initial dialectical hermeneutic of the broader cultural realm to a more focused analysis of Hanley's textual development. The former will be shown to have a continuing fundamental cogency in understanding the cultural process of class struggle, while the latter's relevance lies in its application to the increasingly multivocal world of Hanley's fiction.

If the fictional worlds of *Boy* and 'Sheila Moynihan' leave the reader with an overwhelming sense of the implacable monoliths of industrial darkness and Catholic piety - both subjectivized ideologies of the external world - then *Ebb and Flood*, while retaining much of Hanley's metaphorical universe, begins to reveal the socially liberating potential of the dialogue. The concept of the 'dialogic' nature of language derives from V N Vološinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929). From the basic Marxist axiom that it is 'social being that determines consciousness' Vološinov develops a theory of language using a Saussurian linguistic vocabulary. Psychological processes, the mechanisms of thought all derive from the primary social existence of the sign and the nature of psychological reality is intelligible solely in sociological terms. Thus, the word, as the fundamental means of social communication, must be analyzed first and foremost as a 'social sign before its function as the medium of consciousness can be understood' (Vološinov, 1973, p. 15). Yet the transformation from the outer to the 'inner sign' - the internalization of meanings as ideology - is no simple process, but occurs as a result of 'an intersecting of differently oriented social interests within one and the same sign community, i.e., *by the class struggle*' (Ibid, p. 23). The inherent nature of language and

thought is, therefore, dialogic - '*resembling the alternating lines of a dialogue*', (p. 38) reflective of the totality of social interaction whereby speakers and listeners from the same language community reaffirm the utility of existing signs within a system and mutually create new ones. The way in which that change and development takes place, always involves an addresser and an addressee, so that even in the absence of one - i.e. in introspection - there is always an implied other. Such a theory has profound implications for the novel, which is primarily a bourgeois medium:

> The very same thing that makes the ideological sign vital and mutable is also, however, that which makes it a refracting and distorting medium. The ruling class strives to impart a supraclass, eternal character to the ideological sign, to extinguish or drive inward the struggle between social value judgements which occurs in it, to make the sign uniaccentual. (Ibid, p. 23)

The same ideological forces are at work in bourgeois criticism which denies the multiaccentuality of discourse and maintains the illusion that the novel is primarily a univocal medium of individual expression, a product of the private domain. Yet a novel is also *a verbal performance in print* (p. 95) and as such socially interactive, since as Vološinov reiterates, 'the whole route between inner experience ("the expressible") and its outward objectification ("the utterance") lies entirely across social territory' (p. 90).

Yet, as already argued above, Hanley's modernism, while it is oriented towards a radical use of inherently bourgeois forms, can at the same time suppress the multi-accentual potentialities of novelistic method in pursuit of a unifying principle. However, as Adorno argues 'the more integrated works of art are, the more disintegrated are their constituent elements taken separately' (Adorno, 1984, p. 78). The greater revolutionary potential in Hanley's work, therefore, lies not in its integration but in 'a radical separation of its elements'.[120] Already in *Boy* it was observed how the world of childhood is beset by the multiple accents of different linguistic communities (see Chapter 4, p. 43). Before he encounters the vernacular world of adult sexuality, Fearon has already been bewildered

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[120] See a Brechtian reading of *Ulysses* by Colin MacCabe, who, against Eliot's identification of a unifying 'mythic method', argues that Joyce's text radically 'separates' the elements of its discourse (MacCabe, 1983, pp. 69-103).

by the brutalizing language of initiation:

> Have you ever had your trousers pulled in a boiler? [...] Have you ever seen your sister washing herself in the bath? [...] Have you ever seen your mother when she wasn't so well there? [...] Have you ever seen a fly? (Hanley, 1990a, p. 56)

Both here and later when Fearon is in turn confronted by the more subtle slang of sailors, the language of the sea-going and dockside working class has the potential radically to oppose the more sophisticated codes of bourgeois aesthetics. Yet that pre-occupation with sexuality provides no liberating nor energizing source of vitality but, in its debased form, affords one more passage into the darkness of modernity from which the 'boy' first emerged. If darkness here functions as the closure of bourgeois tragedy - a framing device for the artistic totality - in *Ebb and Flood*, which emerges out of several concurrent Hanley projects, there is a greater variety of conflicting elements, from different class positions.

Ostensibly, Hanley's second volume for The Bodley Head aspires to a similar symbolic code. The book jacket, again by Alan Odle (Figure 4) announces its expressionist orientation in darkness: 'Only Odle so far seems to have got under my skin' (Hanley/Boswell, Jun 1932, No. 89) and the reader is again struck by the chiaroscuro quality of working-class life with its contrasts of light and deep shadow. However, in this later novel, there is not so great a sense of the inevitability of events as in *Boy*, but against the enveloping aesthetic of the tragic mode arises the incipient voice of working-class youth. Whereas in the former novel, sexuality is the vehicle for the corruption of a putative innocence, in the latter it assumes its relatively functional place in the process of adolescence. One of the means of escape from the quotidian darkness, is the ritual hunt into 'the nightmare-like world' of pornography:

> "S'help me! That old cock had his pocket full. Full of these postcards. I never saw anything like it before. I've seen Judies in the park on Sundays, but nothing like these. It was great. You never saw such a cocky lot in your life..." (Ibid, p. 15)

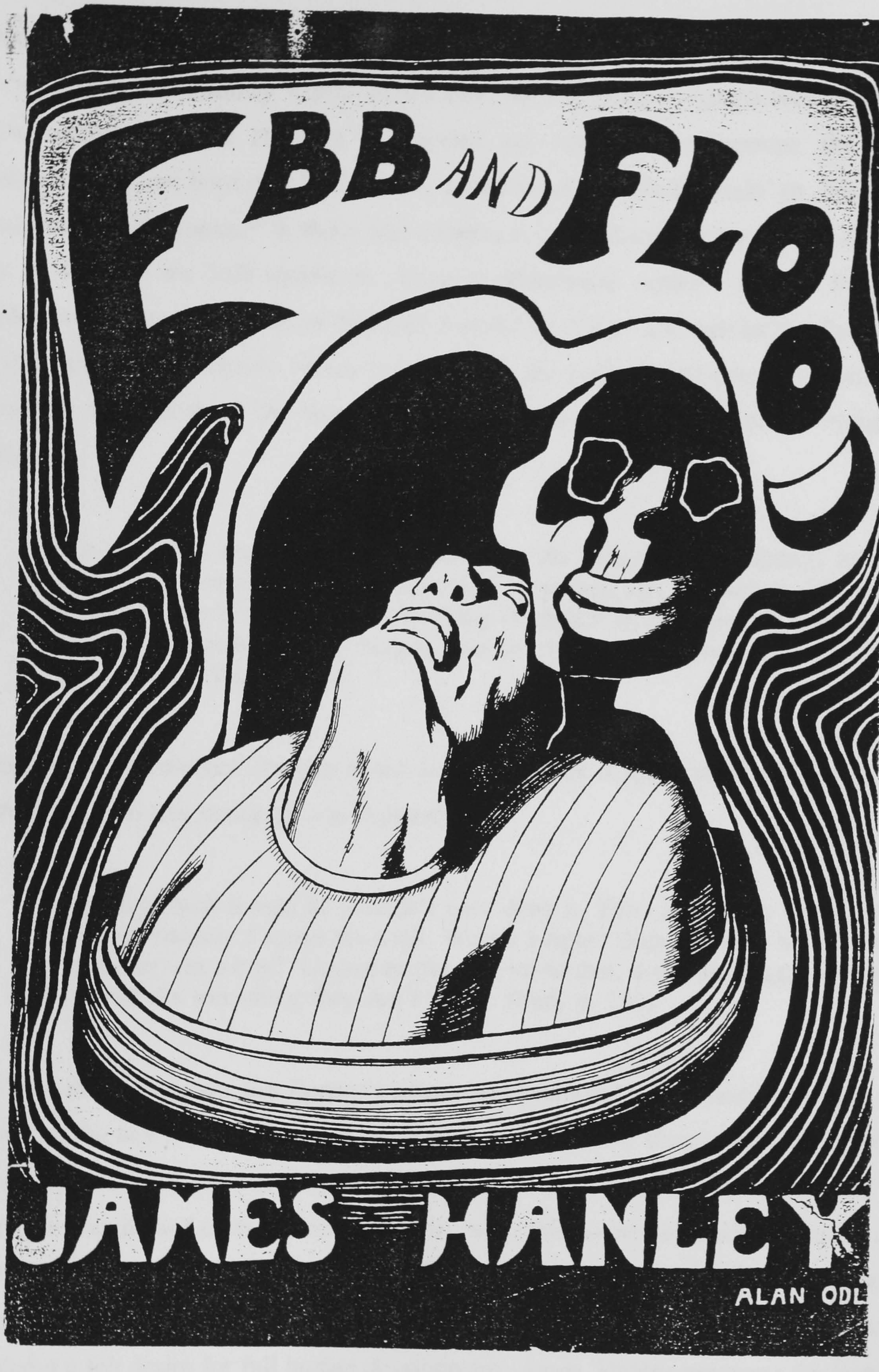

Figure 4: Alan Odle's jacket design for *Ebb and Flood*

Although the apparently sordid quest for the sexual thrill is represented as an extension of 'the monstrous shadowy world' of the city, the exuberant language contradicts the more sombre tones of Hanley's constructed dreamscapes. Furthermore, the boys' energetic rebellion, born of a 'stifled rage, a rage burnt in upon the brain' (p. 20) which produces such 'impotence' in those who observe it, is consciously class-oriented. Their acts of defiance are both against an exclusive educational culture - such as Burney's defilement of the city's statue of 'Michael Angelo' (p. 245) - and against the discourses of officialdom and legality which refuse youth the right to self-determination. The inevitable summation on the short life of a child labourer comes from the Probation Officer:

> ...in nearly all the cases I have dealt with, the guilt or responsibility, to use a social term, lies equally on the shoulders of parents and children [...] In a case like this where one finds a boy working in regular employment, at good wages [...] and a tragedy like this occurs, one centres one's inquiries upon that boy's habits of life. (Ibid, p. 252)

When the young Michael Condron shouts his own version of the truth from the court, he is shouted down and struck by a policeman:

> If I'd have been a man he wouldn't have done it. Even the bloody coroner said 'Shut up' because I spoke the truth. Wasn't I right? Didn't Burney hang himself because he was a boy? 'Course he did. We know that, don't we, Dago. We know that, and it's something they *don't* know. (Ibid, p. 256)

The boys refuse the claim that Burney's suicide was prompted by his gambling losses, but intuit that the boy's obsessions - a fascination with the local slaughterhouse, a private pre-occupation with his own physique - are symptomatic of a profound fear that his depressive family and class environment will prevent him achieving a wholly male social identity: 'he hung himself because he was a boy'. The voice of the adolescent working class - howsoever gendered - is here a passionate declaration against a social order which precludes a felt desire for full human development. Again, Hanley expresses the 'hidden injuries' of child labour. Burns - like Fearon - is forced into the world of men, and at the same time is denied the advantages of a transitional adolescence; trapped, both physically

and mentally, in a constricting boyhood, yet ill-equipped to assume the freedom and responsibilities of adulthood.

While the voices of different class orientations conflict at the external level, a similar textual dynamic is discerned within the internal realm of private thought. Significantly, Condron's mother - like Burns - has, in a different sense, suffered the physical and mental consequences of working-class living, having been struck deaf and dumb by the news of her husband's death in the First War. Bereft of the normal means of expression, Mrs Condron inhabits an apparently solipsistic universe, yet her experience becomes all the more expressive of the predicaments of poverty: her outward signs of helplessness mask an inner articulation which speaks the contradictions of class, preserving a humane sensibility against a reifying social reality. While she observes a growing change in her son, something of a former self remains in 'his hands, which in spite of rough work, their daily contact with dirt and grease and darkness and certain foulness, still retained a sensitiveness' (Ibid, p. 12). What the community condemns as the callous indifference of youth to the infirmity of old age, is denied by the inner dialogues of Mikey and his mother, struggling against an extreme alienation. Against the communal dismay at her son's recklessness, she holds to 'an innate truthfulness in her son, a hidden and unuttered loyalty' (p. 54):

> His youth cried out, she said in her mind, cried out for new things, for change for something different. There was after all she reflected, something beautiful in such hopes, coloured by his own enthusiasms. (p. 270)

Despite his ostensible conformity to the shaping and defining agencies of the male world of industry - the 'charm' of his features 'wiped out by his work, by his contact with the world' (p 83) - a more sympathetic male identity of true solidarity struggles to assert itself. Increasingly for both son and mother, the reality of inner thought formulates an alternative ethos to the exterior domain of alienation. Dream and reality blur so that the two figures are drawn into a shared state of the virtually inexpressible, while striving toward a resolution of differences which never quite succeeds. After the mother wakes from a dream vision of her son suspended over a furnace (an almost exact description of the Tarot 'Hanged Man'), she walks out into the night and the grotesque taunts of the

local police, while Mikey returns from the docks, stricken by the actual memory of his hanged friend. A kind of understanding emerges from the *agon* of separate consciousnesses:

> She looked into his eyes. They were the eyes of a person who has just withdrawn from the abyss. (p. 237)

Here Hanley challenges the established hierarchy of bourgeois aesthetics - particularly within modernism - which tends to subordinate the representation of working-class experience to the relative simplicity of quotidian social relations. Instead, the inner voices of the working class constitute the basis of a multi-accented structure, in which the metaphor of darkness is part of the 'ebb and flow' of a variety of class positions, not the determining factor of an artistic unity.

Hanley and the Bourgeois Modernist Tradition

The question raised here is: how to define such a form, since the implication is that it cannot be characterized in conventional realist terms. Is it indicative of the spontaneous explosion of an incipient and independent working-class culture or is it a peculiar hybrid which fails to establish a secure identity of its own? Attempts have been made to identify or isolate the characteristics of a separate form - significantly the 'proletarian novel' - which is distinct from and therefore in political opposition to the dominant bourgeois form. Although they are politically well motivated, such strategies often conclude by creating an alternative canon which ultimately condemns many putatively working-class novels for not expressing a sufficiently 'working-class' consciousness or for trying too hard to emulate the bourgeois model.[121] What such criticism ignores is the dialectical relationship - both inter- and intra-textual - which permeates the totality of writing in English. Hanley is a cogent example of a writer who spontaneously synthesizes a range and variety of expressive material from different linguistic and cultural communities and the source of such heterogeneity lies in his first job as a merchant seaman. In his 'Expressionism and Working-class Fiction' Worpole opens with a remark from

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[121] See Introduction pp. 2-3.

Benjamin's essay on Nikolai Leskov, 'The Storyteller', which maintains that the storyteller's art is rooted in a synthesis of two separate yet complementary traditions: that of 'the resident tiller of the soil' and that of the 'trading seaman'. In terms of working-class writing, the modern equivalent of the former group emerges in the 1930s 'documentary realist' form 'rooted in the continuity of class and *place*' yet the 'proletarian' novel has a much broader range:

> [...] most recent attention to the writing of that decade has been focused on just one of the traditions - the local - at the expense of understanding attempts to create a different aesthetic of working-class experience based not on place and continuity but on dislocation and transience. (Worpole, 1979, pp. 77, 78)

Although such a division between itinerant and domestic styles, between 'expressionist' and 'realist' schools of 1930s writing is not the precise model which will be here proposed, Worpole perceptively identifies the complex dialectical process which necessarily determines the emergence of a new form. Hanley and his fellow-writers are indeed exemplary of Benjamin's itinerant, the artisanal worker-writer who has served an apprenticeship both in the wider world of foreign travel and in the more enclosed environment of the modern city. Yet what also emerges from their writing - and particularly in Hanley - is that sense of a whole European tradition both melding and disintegrating into a new form. These new contributors to the growing body of working-class writing brought an eclecticism which did not pursue 'a "proletarian" aesthetic completely independent from the achievements of writers who had emerged - often antagonistically - from more bourgeois cultural traditions'. Instead they instinctively recognized that:

> ... a new literary aesthetic could not be developed without reference to the achievements of the bourgeois literary tradition which, if critically read and absorbed, could only provide a greater range of styles and techniques for exploring the multi-faceted and complex world of working-class experience. (Ibid, pp. 92,93)

Therefore, just as Hanley's writing of the sea represents a working-class intervention in the transformation of what was a high romantic tradition, then his representations of

the city are no mere reproductions of the recent explosion of 'modernist' dissent, but depend on a more thorough immersion in the longer transition from particular European realist forms to modernism proper. Hanley was a voracious autodidact, developing extensive studies of a range of literatures and languages from fragmentary gleanings on sea voyages. Whilst still a ship's boy in possession of his own small travelling library, a mate named Repin had introduced him to Russian history and language, after which time he discovered Gogol, then Pushkin and, in his own words, 'devoted seven years to reading the whole of 19th century Russian literature' (Hanley, L, 1979). By contrast, no English writers are acknowledged: replying to Hugh Walpole's vehement criticisms of *Boy*, Hanley defended himself against the alleged influences of Joyce and Lawrence by claiming, rather disingenuously, that he had never read the former and only very little of the latter; it is, rather, the European realist tradition of Balzac, Turgenev, Gogol, Dostoevsky and the latter's German successor, Jacob Wassermann, with which Hanley more closely identified (Hanley/Walpole, 15 11 31).[122]

What initially appears as a heterogeneous group does, however, achieve a significant integrity when read closely with Hanley's work. Central to an understanding of their contribution to his style is that they represent a range of responses to a developing European capitalism, where class struggles are taking place at epochal conjunctions and transitions. Within these texts, struggle is defined by the conflict and interaction of different levels of temporal and social consciousness in the face of a rapidly advancing modernity. What is taking place here, is not only the rise of 'realism' as the literary

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[122] Of these, Dostoevsky is admitted as the greater influence, along with Wassermann:

> It is my earnest opinion that one of [Wassermann's] short stories says more and means more than all the sexual rhapsodies that Lawrence wrote. (Ibid.)

Hanley expressed delight whenever a volume of Wassermann's was received from Alan Steele or Charles Lahr. When sent the final volume shortly after the German author's death in 1934, he expressed his deep regret that it would be 'the last we shall see' (Hanley/Lahr, 6 12 1934, No. 11). John Cowper Powys was, according to Hanley, 'a really big and important writer - a kind of Wassermann' (Hanley/Steele, September 1930). For Hanley on Balzac and Turgenev, see *Broken Water* pp. 261, 289.

manifestation of bourgeois ideology, but also the development of a coterminous and contradictory modernist sensibility, which at the same time subverts the triumphalism of bourgeois thought. By this is meant that, while it is often the case that the primary drive in the bourgeois novel is toward resolution and settlement, particularly in the English novel,[123] the so-called European realist tradition is often much more toward isolation, disintegration and crisis. Such an assertion relies on an understanding of modernism as a gradual and emergent discourse within the 'realist text', the effect of which to the latter is to threaten its disruption and breakdown but ultimately not to eradicate it altogether.

It may be argued that a temporally extended model of modernism has already been refuted, notably by Perry Anderson who contends, against Berman's version in the latter's *All That is Solid Melts into Air*, that the concept depends on an historical conjunction of 'socio-political' factors only present 'from' the 20th century: the presence of persistent '*ancien régime*' values in academic and political life in the light of the advent or imminence of technological and social revolutions (see Anderson, 1984, pp. 103-6).[124] However, although it can be said to have had its high and low points, it is difficult with any certainty to locate modernism in such a temporally specific frame - since those same factors persist in different forms over a longer time-period, both before and after Anderson's designated moment. A modified version recognizes the 'differential' nature of modernity which is determined by a series of such conjunctions or moments. Moreover, the latter are also defined by their subjective temporality - in the way they are lived - as well as in terms of the more conventionally historical or objective concepts of periodization. The case of Hanley, therefore, is more in the spirit of Berman's interpretation of Marx since the novelist incorporates retrospectively into his version of

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[123] The source for this view is Raymond Williams thumbnail sketch in *The Long Revolution*, in which the realist tradition is defined as a representation of a life experience founded in the integral relationships within whole communities and the resolution of individual crises in '... a series of settlements, of new engagements and formal relationships...' (Williams, 1973, p. 313).

[124] This is an interpretation of Anderson's 'three-fold' conjunction of academic, technological and revolutionary factors, which, as he expands them, tend to arrange themselves into the dialectical categories here indicated.

modernism those earlier kinds of conjunction or ideological conflict which, by analogy, more closely approximate to his own. As an introduction to Hanley's *The Furys* sequence of novels, it will be useful to demonstrate how those texts are oriented toward his European mentors.

Honoré de Balzac's massive *Comédie Humaine* represents a historical trajectory beginning with the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution; thereafter tracing the rise of bourgeois values and social transformations in the face of the persistent ideologies of the *ancien régime* up to the time of the author's writing: a span of some 40-50 years. Although not always the setting, Paris constitutes the focal metropolitan space in which capitalist enterprise and a putative meritocracy compete against the indolence of the aristocratic social model. Similarly, the novels of Gogol and Dostoevsky are dependent on the crucial position of Petersburg as the city of a massive and ongoing modern expansion, begun by Peter the Great in 1703, yet which both materially and ideologically was hampered by an antiquated economic strategy and the dominant ideology of Russian feudalism.[125] Thus Petersburg, throughout the 19th century, constituted a dual prospect of a spectacular façade of wealth concealing a hinterworld of slums (Berman, 1991, p. 179). In literary terms, such environments constitute the metropolitan space for the clash of 'modernist' dissent in 'the younger generation' against the resistant ideologies of old regimes, which are either in retreat or adopting new strategies for survival.[126]

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[125] According to Marshall Berman, this was as a direct result of the reign of Tsar Nicholas 1 (1825-1855):

> Ironically, the very incongruities that arose out of Nicholas's politics - a politics of enforced backwardness in the midst of forms and symbols of enforced modernization - made Petersburg the source and the inspiration for a distinctly weird form of modernism, which we might call the modernism of underdevelopment. (Berman, 1991, p. 193)

[126] 'The younger generation' was Dostoevsky's coded phrase or euphemism for revolutionary. Although his works are not set in the city, the modernist clash of generations also constitutes the substance of Turgenev's work (see particularly Bazarov's city 'nihilism' which invades the country complacency of *Fathers and Sons*, Turgenev, 1975, p. 94).

From the early 19th century such a situation has determined a complex way of seeing in which the city's inhabitants participated in, yet were at the same time alienated from, the modern city experience. It was its arrivistes and migrants - emerging from the greater geographic spaces of the sea, the countryside, the steppe, or the province - who collectively were also distanced by their different quality of time consciousness. Balzac's 'heroes' - Lucien de Rubempré, Eugène de Rastignac - arrive in Paris, in search of modernity's material benefits from a France (as their names testify) of an older order: that of a more genteel, yet now distinctly down-at-heel 'provincial merchant aristocracy' (see Jameson, 1979, p. 164). What dominates their lives on arrival is a Paris not of a triumphant bourgeois meritocracy but of a corrupted aristocratic ideology in which a latent indolence more often than not triumphs over the simpler virtues of thrift and conscientious labour. This calls into question the frequent interpretation of Balzac as simply a reactionary conservative and a would-be restorer of the values of the *ancien régime* since, despite Georg Lukács's correct assertion that the 'heroic ideals' of the rising bourgeoisie came to an end with the July revolution (Lukács, 1972, p. 48), the real corruption lay not only in the relentless pursuit of capital, but in its use to uphold the ideology of the court. Nevertheless, the reader discerns in those descriptions of the impoverished upper class a distinct attraction to the outward signifiers of their nobility: an approval of Rastignac's 'figure' and 'manner'; evidence that, 'from his earliest childhood, he had been gently bred' (Balzac, 1908, p. 15) and a genuine sympathy for Eve Chardon's pride which, unlike the boldness of 'a real working-class girl', but, 'like a girl of good family fallen upon evil days' required that she 'suited her behaviour to her unhappy circumstances' (Balzac, 1971, pp. 66-7). It is evident that notions of lineage, rooted in the now declining provincial aristocracy, are somehow to be divorced from its later hedonistic transformations in the capital. While his legal studies in Paris were intended as a bourgeois meritocratic means of restoring the ailing family fortunes, it is the realization of the latent prestige in de Rastignac's name which affords him new opportunities:

> Suddenly the young man's ambition discerned in those recollections of [his aunt's], which had been like nursery fairy tales to her nephews and nieces, the elements of a social success at least as important as the success which he had achieved at the École de droit. (Balzac, 1908, p. 35)

Similarly, Lucien of *Lost Illusions* is seduced away from his partnership in a provincial printing-press by his obsession with the aristocratic Madame de Bargeton. Forsaking his bourgeois father's name of Chardon - associated with the values of scientific enquiry and its rigorous application - he adopts his mother's former name of de Rubempré to follow the higher calling of the poet, which he does with the blessing of his impoverished sister, mother and devoted partner:

> 'You shall be our aristocracy [...] you have a graceful figure [...] you look like a gentleman in your blue coat with yellow buttons and your plain nankeen trousers. In such a circle I would look like a working-man. I should be awkward, ill at ease [...] Whereas you, in order to conform to the snobbery about patronymics, can adopt your mother's name and be known as Lucien de Rubempré. I am and always shall be David Séchard. Everything in the society you are entering is in your favour and my disfavour. (Balzac, 1971, pp. 70-71)

The implication is that such an ambition legitimates the otherwise dubious aristocratic aspiration, as the survival of at least the 'idea' of aristocracy is what guarantees the continuity of the finer sensibilities. Yet there is, nevertheless, a latent critique in Séchard's 'snobbery about patronymics' since the subsequent text is concerned much more with 'the defects to which children of good family are prone', breeding in Lucien 'the egoism which devours the nobility' (Ibid, p. 71).

Furthermore, the ideological clash of voices is made all the more complex by the way Balzac infuses the presence of the underclass as ironic expressions of the corruption of the entire system. Although David's identity of rough-hewn peasant is part of the text's construction of provincial value, his declaration is to a certain extent ironic since he is actually heir to a large estate. Much more directly provocative are the devastating sacrifices of Pére Goriot to maintain the courtly life-style of his daughters, and the condemnations of 'a society rotten to the core' from the ubiquitous criminal, Vautrin (Balzac, 1908, p. 216).[127] It is, then, that paradigmatic encounter with the modern city

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[127] See also *Lost Illusions*, in which the same Vautrin in the guise of the Mephistophelean Abbé Herrera ironically condemns the 'enemies of social order' for their anger at excessive punishments given to a chicken stealer, while business and financial theft is condoned as 'merely an instrument by which fortunes change hands' (Balzac,

which is the model for Hanley's projected novel sequence, *The Furys Chronicle*. Balzacian ideological conflicts are reproduced in early-20th-century Liverpool: pre-industrial Ireland with dockland modernity; family and Catholic values against youthful dissent; individual ambition against collectivity. Yet what more concerns this thesis is not merely the fact of these contradictions, but the means of their representation, since Hanley's 'polyphonic' text is also constituted by a struggle with style. In his memories of Liverpool after eight years voluntary exile the city is characteristically painted as a Hanleyan dreamscape, in which 'the tapestry and texture' of its industrialized 'wilderness' is, to him 'strange in a terrifying way' (Hanley, 1937a, p. 277). Relishing a solitary walk at night, he is struck by the 'strange colour under the yellowish lights':

> ... and above it the sky an almost angry red reflecting the labours of men far below, the ship growing upon the piles. And from that red sky to look down a narrow street, a long street, its fast shut doors, streams of light issuing from beneath, or from windows here and there, peopling the streets with shadows of all shapes and sizes. (Ibid, pp. 290-1)

Such a representation recalls Dostoevsky's response to Petersburg:

> [...] I stopped for a moment and threw a piercing glance along the river into the smoky, frostily dim distance, which had suddenly turned crimson with the last purple of the sunset that was dying over the hazy horizon. Night lay over the city [...] the taut air quivered at the slightest sound, and columns of smoke like giants rose from all the roofs upward through the cold sky [...]It seemed finally that this whole world with all its inhabitants, strong and weak, with all their domiciles, the shelters of the poor, the gilded mansions, resembled at this twilight hour a fantastic magic vision, a dream, which would in its turn vanish immediately and rise up as steam toward the dark-blue sky. (Quoted in Berman, 1991, p. 192)

Yet the spectral and dream-like evocations discovered in 'A Weak Heart' and 'White Nights' are by no means characteristic. Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* is indeed given to reveries and visions, yet these afford him no romantic contemplation. Rather they bear an homologous relation to his everyday consciousness, so that the boundaries between waking and sleeping become blurred; as in Raskolnikov's dream of returning to

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1971, p. 647).

the old woman's flat:

> He lapsed into a deep slumber. It seemed to him that he did not remember how he had got into the street. It was late evening. In the gathering dusk the full moon shone more and more brightly, but the air seemed more than usually stifling. The streets were full of people: [...] there was a smell of mortar, dust and stagnant water.[...]
> He tried to scream and - woke up.
> He drew a breath, but curiously enough his dream seemed to go on. (Dostoevsky, 1968, pp. 292-295)

In Dostoevsky is embedded the twin desires, both to engage with modernity and to create the necessary distance; at once both the quotidian reality and the dream. If history is the nightmare from which modernism is trying to awake, then distanciation is, surely, the necessary strategy for confronting the realities. Yet this would surely condemn the artist again to the function of mere contemplation. As Hanley testifies in his autobiography, his original idea was to adopt a more oblique approach. An early literary ambition was to create the impersonal narrative of a ship in which there would be no human beings - 'the only character [would] be the ship [...] The whole life, the Odyssey of a ship' (Hanley 1937a p. 275). By 1931 this had developed into his equally fantastic troopship project 'Memoirs of a Trooper', a form of narrative which Hanley swore was totally unprecedented (Hanley/Raymond, 21 1 31, No. 483). Such a text forms the basis of his *Hollow Sea*, yet in the meantime, it was Liverpool's poverty which always claimed the foreground. Before leaving for London and the prospect of a literary career, the author derived new inspiration from a final tour of his first ship, when his attention was drawn to a small boy dragging a cart loaded with rope:

> ... I saw the look in his eye [...] Just a dull look, a dull staring at the grey stones over which he dragged his tiny feet, his little hands black and sweaty gripping those shafts.
> 'Damn the ship,' I said, 'damn the ship. I'll write about him.' (Hanley, 1937a, p. 288)

Of course, Hanley was eventually to write about both, but the narrative is illustrative of the dual or multiple responses modernity dictates: a decided realism, yes, yet in the struggle to find forms that would adequately express the grotesque and distorted reality

of the working class, there is always the compulsion to push beyond the paradigmatic boundaries. Nevertheless, although fascinated and intrigued by the fantastical possibilities modernity offers, the novelist is also compelled to confront the poverty which pervades his city:

> ... and I was filled with a hatred and a rage, that, patterning that picture which I had seen early in the morning, there should be the faces of innocence and experience. All is hidden. Beneath the picture that gladdens the eye, quickens the pulse, in the midst of all that riot of colour and sound, endeavour and courage and strength lay greyness. (Hanley, 1937a, p. 289)

Although it arises out of a more developed modernity, Hanley's textual clash of multiple historical, class and formal perspectives is founded on a line of descent from Balzac, through the Russians to the later non-English Europeans like Wassermann which, with Hanley as the later inheritor, argues for a broader and temporally more extended definition of 'modernism' as opposed to the conventional idea of its sudden 20th-century eruption and equally rapid decline. Behind the latter is the constantly advanced contention that 'modernism' was solely a matter of a momentary bourgeois dissent, after which realism - including that of the working class - was firmly and unproblematically re-established.[128] The example of Hanley refutes this. His earlier contact with a broader European literary inheritance and subsequent divorce from the modish milieux of the metropolitan literary world meant that he came to writing unencumbered by the need to adhere to any formal constraints. After his personal crisis of experimentation with 'Sheila Moynihan' Hanley instinctively developed a style overdetermined by the social and cultural struggles of a developing European modernity. Hanley's 'working-class modernism', which both synthesizes and holds in dialectical suspension the varied components of that process at its latter end will now be more precisely delineated.

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[128] See, for instance, David Lodge, 'The Novelist at the Crossroads', for whom the restoration of realism after modernist attempts to overthrow it has been the guarantee and confirmation of liberal humanism (Lodge, 1986, pp. 32-34).

CHAPTER 11. *THE FURYS*: MODERNISM AND THE WORKING CLASS

Irish Myth and Contemporary Women

Hanley's pentalogy of novels centred on his home city of Liverpool - as many contemporary reviews testified - was a working-class response to an early 20th-century popular bourgeois form: the family saga or chronicle.[129] Conceived with comparable ambition, it was originally planned as a 'tetralogy', a conscious act of literary emancipation for a class which 'in English literature [...] has been nothing but a host of low and comic characters from Dickens right down to D H Lawrence' (Hanley/Parsons, 20 7 34, No. 51). Full of enthusiasm for its grandness of design, Hanley set out his plan to Henry Raymond, his new publisher at Chatto & Windus:

> I want to show the downfall of a whole family excepting one, and that is the woman. That woman is heroic, powerful, exercises a tremendous influence over her family. I shall show her under every light. I cannot attempt to describe in detail the amazing lives of these people, sometimes fantastic, but never, never divorced from reality. Working class lives are full of colour, of poetry, there is the stuff of drama in the most insignificant things. (Hanley/ Raymond, 2 2 34, No. 22)

Yet it differs fundamentally from any previous or contemporary versions - such as Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*, with which it was compared - in that it represents a radical transformation of the many realist inheritors of the tradition established by Trollope. In Hanley's texts, it is difficult to detect any omniscient narrator or any privileged authorial voice, rather the family is discovered to be a microcosm in which is contained a whole range of positions which reflect the wider social or macrocosmic level of discourse. The polyvalent or multi-accentual text, present in both a nascent Balzacian and a more mature 'modernism', represents a further development of the dialogic qualities of Hanley's writing which more closely approximates to what Vološinov's colleague Mikhail Bakhtin calls 'polyphony'.

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[129] Comprising *The Furys* (1935); *The Secret Journey* (1936); *Our Time is Gone* (1940); *Winter Song* (1950); *An End and a Beginning* (1958).

To briefly introduce a Bakhtinian understanding of Hanley, there is no more appropriate text than Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* which defines the 19th-century Russian author as 'the creator of the polyphonic novel' (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 7). By that is understood that Dostoevsky's writing is a radical transformation of what Bakhtin identifies as the main current of the European novel -the **monologic** text. The latter - Tolstoy is given as the primary example - is characterized by a novel in which all the discursive material is relegated or relativized to a textual dominant. In such a text 'characters have become objects, fixed images in the author's design' where the 'pragmatic links at the level of the plot [...] bind and combine finalized images of people in the unity of a monologically perceived and understood world' (Ibid. p. 7). On the other hand, 'the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels' is '*a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices* [...]:

> What unfolds in his works is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a *plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each* [sic] *with its own world* combine but are not merged in the unity of the event. (Ibid, p. 6)

Hanley's texts are similarly constructed: to show his characters, as he asserted 'under every light'. Yet his textual strategy is also constituted of a Dostoyevskian dialogism at the level of genre, a radically new 'polyphonic use and interpretation of generic combinations' (Ibid. p. 105).[130] That generic combination, which is now more readily associated with Joyce, is in Hanley less consciously, yet no less effectively achieved - as already argued in the case of his sea stories - through the use of different modes of realism together with various modernist sub-genres like 'expressionism': a more complex novelistic interplay, for which the umbrella term 'modernism', nevertheless, remains the most apt interpretative model.

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[130] Bakhtin traces such a combination in Dostoevsky back to 'remote antiquity': to the Socratic dialogue, the Menippean satire and on to the Mediaeval tradition of Rabelaisian 'carnival'. This is not suggest that all the components of such a combination are still present substantially in Hanley - although there are for instance frequent spontaneous eruptions of the 'carnivalesque' in his public scenes - but rather that it is the very combinatory or juxtaposed generic factor which defines his 'modernist' polyphony.

Most suggestive of the place of *The Furys* sequence within that broadly determined movement is its name. As Hanley went on to explain to his publishers, much more than a localized representation, its people and events were intended to assume a much wider significance: 'this tetralogy embraces more than a family and more than a city. Its characters embrace the world' (Hanley/ Parsons, 20 7 34, p. 51). Furthermore, it was clear that, in the very choice of name, Hanley was aware of the classical allusion, since he had already used the image in *Ebb and Flood*, when he has Condron vehemently protest 'as though the furies themselves had seized him' (Hanley, 1932, p. 254).[131] If, as Hanley maintained, he had only a passing acquaintance with Joyce, then the final choice for a whole novel sequence evoking Aeschylus calls into question any such claim. Whereas *The Furys* does not pretend to any 'mythical method', it nevertheless has produced some critical responses which allude to or assume an Oresteian model - if in nothing more than a frequent misspelling of the name as 'The Furies'.[132] Storm Jameson makes such an assumption when she refers to the representation of the mother, Fanny, as reminiscent of a 'Greek Tragedy' (Jameson/Hanley, 22 12 33) and V S Pritchett in a remarkably perceptive review of *The Secret Journey* describes the author's 'legend-dimensioned view' of his characters who 'are a complete mythology in themselves' (Pritchett, 1936, p. 250). In fact, a common response among the more sympathetic reviews was to refer to its 'epic' or 'heroic' quality.[133]

What that awareness and response reveal is a general cultural receptivity to the dominant paradigm of modernism, set by its two primary exemplars - *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* - and, particularly, the author's predisposition to accede to its demands. The question begged, however, is, can such a strategy be considered as a radical class transformation

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[131] This is also confirmed by Hanley's explaining to Charles Lahr, in defence of its grandiose sound, that 'Fury is an Irish surname, of course' (Hanley/Lahr, 1933 (a) No.11).

[132] See, for instance, a number of letters to the publishers from booksellers giving their initial responses and sales reports (Chatto Files, 1935, pp. 561-585); *St Martin's Review*, April 1935, and *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 2 35.

[133] See, for instance, H. M Tomlinson in *The Observer* 3 2 35; *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 2 35; *The Sunday Referee*, 10 2 35; Ralph Wright in *The Daily Worker*, Dec, 1935.

of that paradigm or as an aspiration to accede to the dominant aesthetic? The answer is that the putative mythic dimension of The Furys chronicle is precisely one of those pivotal nodes of class and cultural conjunction around which the ideological battle is waged at the textual level. While there are no exact parallels with Aeschylus, the novel consistently evokes the Oresteian original. The Furys, like the house of Atreus, are accursed, symbolic of a once proud family or nation, fallen from the natural state of Irish grace, divided by enmity and ambition in the 'maelstrom' of the modern imperial city, and 'scattered over the earth' (Hanley, 1935a, p. 37). Peter, the modern Orestes, youngest son and failed priest, is both destroyer of his mother's aspirations - in that he is sent home in disgrace from the seminary - and avenger: the slayer of the moneylender, Anna Ragner, who holds the family in the iron grip of debt. Peter's initial action thus brings down upon his own head the anger of his race because he was the hope of maintaining its spiritual purity, now threatened by modernity's corrupting influence. Yet the second action only provokes the greater anger of modernity itself in the guise of the mob and the judiciary. The Furys are thus pursued and haunted by the material consequences of their own rage which re-invokes their dual aspect: the city environment has transformed them into what their name implies 'the angry ones' the modern dwellers of the abyss:

> For the sake of evil they were born; and evil is
> The dark they dwell in, subterranean Tartarus.
> (Aeschylus, 1986, p. 149)

Yet they still retain, primarily in the mother's purity of aspiration and allegiance to Catholic Ireland, their alter-identity of the Kindly Ones, implicit in which is the Furys' dynastic or noble role as cultural guardians.

If that mythic dimension can be said to suggest a dominant literary orientation in *The Furys* chronicle, then its modernism is both supported and undermined by the interplay of other components or voices which constantly contend for a privileged reading. That interpretation is an immediate reminder of a recent Marxist post-structuralist school of thought which, centred on Joyce's revolutionary use of language, argues for its effects as 'decentring'. As distinct from the classic realist text which centres the reader in a privileged consciousness, Joycean modernism immerses him or her in a 'juxtaposition of

discourses' (MacCabe, 1979, p. 114). Jameson, however, traces a similar kind of narrative strategy back to Balzac:

> We will indeed want to suggest that the "decentering" of Balzacian narrative [...] is to be found in a **rotation of character centers** which deprives each of them in turn of any **privileged status**. (Jameson, 1986, p. 161, emphases added)

What Jameson argues is that such a strategy 'antedates the emergence of the centred subject,' which has not developed 'the latter's textual determinants, such as point of view or protagonists with whom the reader sympathizes in some more modern psychological sense' (Ibid, p. 161). If that interpretation identifies an as yet undeveloped 'realism', it nonetheless recognizes a complexity in Balzac's texts which looks forward to a more 'modernist' ideological struggle, in this case between a desire for wish-fulfilment and the 'unanswerable resistance of the Real' (p. 183). Here 'the Real' is interpreted as a modern interrogation or point of limitation of pre-modern ideologies. Yet that tension between the two can also be read as the foundation of a particular line of modernist development which, against the conventional notion that it began at the moment of 1900, locates the phenomenon in a historical continuum. Just as Balzac's 'fantasm' of the restoration of the *ancien régime* paradoxically reveals the 'absent cause' which resists desire - the Real as 'the fallen world of capitalism' (Jameson, 1989, pp. 180-184) - so Hanley's *The Furys* projects the unfallen world of pre-capitalist Ireland as the latent object of desire whose limitations are defined by the 'real' of working-class Gelton.

If as Hanley asserts, 'real nobility and heroism' are to be found 'more amongst the women than the men' in *The Furys* (Hanley/Raymond, 1 2 34, No. 22), then Fanny Fury and her sister, Brigid, represent the 'purer' line of descent - the Mangans - of which Fanny's father, the stroke-smitten Anthony is the only male, but with a history that stretches back to the days of the Great Famine. Initially, the two sisters are represented as essentially antithetical. The spinster Brigid descending on Gelton (Liverpool) from Cork ostensibly to bring home the disgraced Peter, provokes the old antagonism when Fanny had made, in old Anthony's words, the 'tragic mistake' of marrying into the disreputable Fury family (Hanley, 1935a, p. 37). The sudden symbolic appearance of old Ireland in the midst of a family of Irish migrants reveals not only the sharp distinctions

between the degraded slums of Hatfields and the relative tranquillity of provincial Cork, it also emphasizes the latter's 'spiritual isolation' compared with the divided yet more vibrant world of the metropolis (Hanley, 1935a, p. 105). That complex way of seeing does not privilege any essentialist view of Irish Catholic society, yet Ireland does remain a value, the dream of a restored lineage and stability, and from that perspective, the two sisters represent a point of resistance to the brutalizing and racist environment with which the Furys daily contend. Brigid Mangan might be scheming and self-obsessed but she is also representative of that older Irish insouciance which resists metropolitan adaptability. It is her sister Fanny who has yielded to its necessity in order to survive:

> ... for she and not Brigid had tasted fully of the fruits of that malignant, if not bestial curiosity, that strange wilful, bat-like groping into all the sacred recesses of life, that seemed the horror not only of Hatfields but all Gelton. (Hanley, 1938a, p. 325)

Brigid is invulnerable to Gelton's anti-Irish abusiveness, sailing proudly through the city in her provocative emerald green, and survives through her ability to distance herself from the surrounding turmoil imagining herself back in her own house in Ireland, where she was 'immune from the storm and stress of the world [...] the very spirit of the house in the Mall seem[ing] to have floated down on her in tranquillity and peace' (Ibid, p. 341). Fanny, however, has to struggle daily with the oppressive cares of poverty and debt. Her 'heroism' is of the quality of Dostoevsky's Mrs Marmaladov, worn down by the sheer drudgery of keeping the household from the workhouse, yet dreaming still of the 'beautiful life'. Peter's failure at the seminary signals the end of her dream to reproduce some familial dignity, yet her father, disabled as he is, remains the silent though eloquent witness to that vanished world:

> This imprisoned and ageing flesh was but the magic mirror through which she could see like many bright suns the happy days of her childhood in Ireland. Through him she could resurrect those times past and gone. She could put out her hand and touch them, those magic and lovely days. [...] In such moments her whole soul surrendered to a feeling, delicious, joyous, and yet melancholy, to which she could give no utterance. (Hanley, 1938a, p. 180)

While Fanny and Brigid are more closely associated with an Irish age of innocence, the

other Fury women are surely representative of its metropolitan fall from grace. Maureen, the only daughter, is perceived by Brigid to have been 'coarsened' and 'ruined' by the jute factory and an ill-matched early marriage to the 'repulsive-looking' Joseph (Hanley, 1935a, pp. 155-160). Yet Sheila, Desmond's wife - whom Fanny calls 'his beautiful prostitute' (Ibid p. 140) - is a more ambivalent figure. Paradoxically, she, too, cherishes the memory of another life:

> 'Imagine a valley, a valley so green that there is no other green like it in the world, and in this valley and on the bank of an old river a large white house. [...] In the winter I used to love the rain, and all the smells that come into the air, wet leaves, wet grass, glistening moss on the banks, the dull leaden sky, the running water, the flights of birds over the house, just as it was getting dusk. [...] I had all this to myself, and nobody to say nay to even my smallest wish. Everything was mine, everything. I was free as the birds in the air.' (Hanley, 1938a, p. 349)

What Sheila brings to Gelton - and what so fascinates Desmond and her lover, Peter - is not only a scent of Ireland but a mystique about her origins, which are rooted in an extant yet declining Anglo-Irish aristocracy. Again very reminiscent of Balzac, here, is the instinctual recognition in Hanley of familial relations as fundamentally social as well as psychic. As Jameson again reminds the reader:

> Sartre's *Search for a Method* has taught us to read the family situation as the mediation of class relationships in society at large, and to grasp the parental functions as socially coded or symbolic positions as well. (Jameson, 1989, p. 180)

If anything, Sheila's class position is a more entrenched and imperially complicit one than Brigid's. Yet she has 'escaped' to the *declassé* house of a trade union activist. No precise reason is given, except that, similar to the way that Brigid is 'beckoned' by 'an almost magnetic power' from Gelton's pubs (Hanley, 1935a, p. 194), Sheila finds something compelling and transforming about her immersion in city life:

> 'Here was a meaning to life after all. People doing things, men working, women working, night and day, eating, sleeping, seeing. Everything became orderly, chaos vanished. Existence had a purpose. One was beginning to grow.' (Hanley, 1938a, p. 353)

Thus the dream of rural or provincial stability is eclipsed by the delimiting power of the city's reality. While nation and religion constitute the bedrock of colonial resistance for the Irish working class, they are also perceived, ironically from a different class perspective, as archaic and conservative. Sheila, at the symbolic level, represents the dual aspect of modern Ireland: in her associations with rurality, the pure idea of Motherland (like her namesake Sheila Moynihan habituated to lonely walks along the shore); and as metropolitan prostitute, the 'fallen' or immigrant culture of the mainland. However the desire for 'growth' is a strong textual suggestion that, for all its faults, it is with the latter that any hope of social transformation lies. Emblematically, the political activism of her husband, Desmond, and the intellectual rebellion of her lover, Peter, are the radical alternatives to the 'heroic' quietism of the Furys.

The 'Chronotope' of the Strike

Indeed the essential opposition of the two sons Desmond and Peter rehearses the familial and ideological struggle in Balzac's *The Black Sheep* between the two brothers, the Napoleonic 'man of action', Phillipe, and the artistic and sensitive Joseph. The first novel, *The Furys*, invokes those responses through the emblematic watershed of a significant public event, which in Bakhtin's terms, assumes a formative rôle as the novelistic 'chronotope'.[134] Here Hanley again discloses his debt to the Russians in that for his central spatio-temporal device he invokes Pushkin's 'public square', the place of 'licence' in which the variety of temporal representations and consciousnesses of the social totality is assembled.[135] In *The Furys* the social event of the strike, thus, brings together the various conceptions of historical time within an epochal and crucial present, yet which in their various ways struggle both backwards into 'historical inversion' - a consciousness

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[134] The term, 'chronotope'- literally 'time-space'- is coined by Bakhtin from Relativity Theory and adapted as a 'metaphor' for those literary formations in which 'spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole'. A complex and mobile term, it is used by Bakhtin in the sense of a specific device within the novel (as in the 'public square' or 'threshold' space of Dostoevsky's works) and to define the different genres out of which the 19th century novel historically emerged - e.g the ancient forms of Greek Romance: adventure novel of ordeal, the adventure novel of everyday life and the biographical novel (See Bakhtin, 1990, pp. 84-86).

[135] See Bakhtin, 1990, p. 132, quoting Pushkin's rejection of aristocratic habits in the Russian theatre, proclaiming that 'national tragedy was born in the public square'.

which prefers the past - and forwards 'along the historically productive horizontal' (see Bakhtin, 1990, pp. 148-157). On such a principle, that which has already been shown to be classically inspired can be considered to be 'mythic time'; the pre-colonial experience of the Mangans might be termed 'Irish time'; while the third temporal component which confronts both of these - the prospect of social change in a new epochal phase of modernity - can be designated 'future time'.

As introduced in Part 1, the date of the novel's setting - 1911 - is itself chronotopically significant - a watershed or crisis point in the history of Liverpool's working-class struggle. In this Bakhtinian juxtaposition of both public and private consciousnesses is the recognition of the social and temporal complexity of the working-class experience. There is no monologic imposition of a preferential discourse; rather a range of subjective responses to a diffuse social oppression, which embraces both the necessity for determined action for the future and the evasion of painful consequences, often through preferred allegiances with the past. Those complex feelings are structured, not only in family confrontations and in private thoughts, but are primarily evident in the turmoil of public events. Such is the case in Hanley's two descriptions of mass demonstrations in *The Furys* which echo the actual events of that day. Yet his means of representation refuses the characteristic 'monological' structure of the conventional 'proletarian' novel. Hanley's is not a committed art in the sense of drawing specific politically propagandist conclusions. To do that would, as Adorno has asserted, collude in a bourgeois, Zolaesque aestheticization inherent in naturalism (Adorno, 1984, pp.326,327). Rather Hanley is more an example of how art 'indicts by refraining from express indictment' and of how modernism - in its concentration on formal method - is the more apt strategy since, in Adorno's suggestion, 'maybe denunciation is made possible only by figuration' not solely by an expressly realist treatment of social phenomena: 'what makes art works socially significant is content that articulates itself in formal structures' (Ibid, pp. 181, 327). Truth content, therefore, emerges not only out of alternating subject positions, but also from a multiplicity of shifting styles and genres.

As to the latter, one of the common accusations levelled at Hanley by his reviewers was

that he had 'no sense of humour'.[136] Certainly, as already witnessed in the early works, his novels graphically and formally announce their sombre quality, yet that critical commonplace ignores the frequent irruption of the farcical and the carnivalesque into the text:[137] an inevitable response to the often absurd quality of the quotidian 'Real'. As in Dostoevsky, that form of representation is constitutive of the public event which provokes the outward manifestations of an underlying neurosis, yet formerly it is a class response (a carnivalesque 'profanation' or mockery) to high cultural pretensions of seriousness. On the way to the first demonstration in 'Powell Square', fellow workers Desmond (a lapsed Catholic) and Andrew Postlethwaite (the 'Billie') meet. The latter emerges red-faced from a pub, 'dressed in a check suit quite unsuited to that period of the year, a white cut-away collar, red tie with white spots on it, and a pair of light-brown boots [...] more like a bookmaker's clerk than a loco man' (Hanley, 1935a, p. 259). Then something unexpected happens:

> Suddenly out of a side street there appeared with the thunderous rush of water a crowd of men and women. It swung into the road, flooding the side-walk, carrying everything in its wake, passing strangers, people coming home from church and chapel...
> In a moment it had picked up both Desmond and Mr Postlethwaite in its stride. There was no escaping it. It was like an all-embracing octopus. Mr Postlethwaite shouted, 'Hey! Hey! What the hell...?' but a woman's elbow seemed to jam itself in his mouth. Desmond hung on to the little man. Amongst this drab crowd, Andrew Postlethwaite's check suit seemed more out of place than ever. (Ibid, p. 261)

Here, in the incongruous mingling of the glaring suit and the monotone mob are the mischievous and absurdist aspects present in any form of mass assembly. Such a group, not the disciplined marchers but a gang of 'looters out for excitement' (p. 263), is part of the textual layering prior to the inevitable violence. Yet, equally, there are other

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[136] See, for instance, Howard Spring in *The Evening Standard*, 7.2.35; *The Daily Telegraph*, 22.2.35.

[137] In fact comical or farcical incidents frequently punctuate the texts, particularly in those public scenes when the Furys emerge onto the city streets: e.g. the tram-ride to the Pier head to meet Peter with the paralysed old man in tow (Hanley, 1935a, pp. 81-90), the scenes with Brigid and the wizened old shopkeeper, the 'ju-jube sucking' Miss Pettigrew (Hanley, 1938a, pp. 252-266).

determining factors, not so much the product of mass action but of deliberate official provocation. As well as the unruly elements of the crowd, also in evidence is the ubiquitous figure of the *agent provocateur*, again an egregious and incongruous sight of colourful prosperity amidst the various tones of grey. It takes only the briefest parade of conspicuous wealth on a hotel balcony - an apparently 'bibulous' gentleman in evening dress adjusting his pink buttonhole - to provoke the necessary class hatred, the consequent mounted charges of the police and the 'sickening hum' of the baton (Ibid, p. 276).

Such is the final consequence of a series of emotional moments, a complexity of determining instances leading to an event which is variously identified as 'a battlefield', a 'siege', 'authoritative fury' yet also as 'the mob getting its head', 'open revolt', all in the space of a few pages (pp. 276, 277). However, what increasingly emerges in excess of any social or political analysis is that suggestion of some quintessential metropolitan malevolence: a more abstract form of expressionism which increasingly dominates *The Furys* chronicle; whether it takes the form of the casual curiosity of neighbours, the jeering of a music-hall audience or the full-bloodied fury of the hue and cry.[138] As distinct from the industrial-based novels of his contemporaries - Lewis Jones from South Wales, James Barke from Scotland - the crowd in Hanley is not so much a disciplined body, united in pursuit of a common goal, as the embodiment of an undifferentiated menace, or the uncontrollable chaos of nightmare.[139] Yet that rapid shift from a quotidian Real into the metropolitan dreamscape is just as legitimate a response to a perennial and omni-present oppression as any committed version of social realism. As Berman says of Gogol's representation of the Petersburg night:

> At this hour the Nevsky grows at once more real and more unreal. More real in that the street is now more animated by direct and intense real needs: sex, money, love; these are the involuntary currents of purpose in the air [...]. On the other hand, the very depth and intensity of these desires distort people's perceptions of each other, as well as their presentation of themselves. Both self and others are

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[138] See Peter Fury's flight from the crime scene in *The Secret Journey*, (Hanley, 1938a pp 566-569) and the public pillory perpetrated on Joseph Killkey in *Our Time is Gone* (Hanley, 1949, pp. 406-410).

[139] I am indebted to Ken Worpole for pointing this out.

> enlarged in the magical light but their grandeur is as evanescent and baseless as the shadows on the walls. (Berman, 1991, pp. 198,199)

Sex and Death

Such an enlargement and distortion occurs in Hanley's second representation of a public demonstration - this time at night - when, as the authorities attempt to clear the streets of a growing spontaneous assembly, Peter is struck by 'something nightmarish about the sudden change' (Hanley, 1935a, p. 326). However, Hanley's 20th-century version of that duality makes the audacious link between those two 'involuntary currents': desire, and its negative opposite, the Freudian death instinct or will to destruction. What often strikes the reader in Hanley's fiction is the extent to which his use of metaphor invokes the most formative period of his life, the First World War, during which he served both on troopships and in the trenches. As Paul Fussell has argued, that moment in 20th-century history has made itself felt in the most diverse of literary forms right up till our own time and it is remarkable how in later forms of modernism the experience of the trenches persistently shapes and determines the formal strategies of the inter-war years: structures of feeling which, as in David Jones's *In Parenthesis* (1937) for instance, imbricate the trench landscape with that of the 1930s industrial one (Fussell, 1977, pp 149,150). Such images are immediately noticeable in Hanley's work, particularly in *The Furys*, which locates the family house next to 'the boneyard', an animal processing plant with a persistent 'disgusting smell'.[140] During its mysterious 'night operations' wraith-like figures are seen moving between 'one heap and another'; an indication to Fanny of its recent increase in business (Hanley, 1935a, p. 114). It is, then, not only the drafted contingents of troops which bring to the 'battlefield' of the city the immanent presence of death, but the figurative ambience of wartime. Here the streets are reminiscent of both O'Flaherty's dark exteriors and Sean O'Casey's Dublin tenements, which are similarly saturated with the metaphors of the then recent European conflict.[141] Yet the most

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[140] The 'boneyard' (a slang term for cemetery) is Paul Fussell's word for those places in France where, to this day, human remains from the First War are still turned up on any casual walk through the countryside (See Fussell, 1977, pp. 69-71).

[141] See, for instance, Gypo's flight through the Dublin slums in *The Informer*:

> through narrow streets [...] lanes and archways, streets patched and buttressed,

disturbing aspect of Hanley's invocations of violence and morbidity are, again, their suggested close association with sexual excitement. Paul Fussell also points out how in various literary representations of war, expressions of 'exultation' in self-exposure to danger are often approximate to auto- or homo- erotic fantasies (Fussell, 1977, pp. 271-272). In such a way, Peter Fury's initiation into the forbidden world of sexuality takes place by virtue of the questionable stimulus of the proximity of violence.

That initiation is prefaced by Peter's chance nocturnal encounter with the curiously named Mephistophelian, Professor Titmouse, a spectral emanation which at once signals the metropolitan underworld and the realm of the unconscious. Dressed in a tail-coat, grey trousers, elastic-sided boots and a deerstalker hat, he is immediately identified in the street as a 'brownie' (homosexual), yet the spell he holds over Peter evokes Strindberg's *The Ghost Sonata* in which The Old Man guides and manipulates The Student in order to experience vicariously the pleasures he can no longer enjoy (Strindberg, 1989, p. 166). On the pretext of guiding Peter through the city, the Professor lures him to the central square where, mounted on the back of an elevated stone lion, they are able to witness the second and most violent confrontation of the strike. The image immediately recalls Yevgeny, in Pushkin's 'The Bronze Horseman', who takes refuge on just such a statue as the flood waters of the Neva swirl around his feet (Pushkin, 1964, pp. 243-245). As in the Russian original, the city's streets are transformed by the immanence of cataclysm, but instead of the water, it is Gelton's disaffected crowds who 'like some vast silent river' threaten to swallow them up (Hanley, 1935a, p. 342). Trapped by the proximity of the 'maelstrom', Peter is forced to watch as the violent scenes end in a conflagration of

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> with banks of earth from fallen houses almost damming them in places, pavements strewn with offal, soddened by the rain.
> [...] The ground was a puddle. The walls were blank. He felt with his feet, seeking a dry spot to lie down. Everywhere his boot sank into a puddle. He cursed and moved on a pace. He felt again with his feet. Still more puddles. (O'Flaherty, 1932, pp. 228, 231)

See also the exchange between Davoren and Shields, suffused with First War references such as 'Morpheus', 'poppies', 'bloody poets', 'land-mines', 'the infernal din' at the opening of *The Shadow of a Gunman* (O'Casey, 1926, pp. 120, 121). I am indebted to my colleague Nick Worrall for this insight.

buildings, transfiguring the people as 'Goblins from the Inferno' (Ibid, pp. 344). Most disturbing of all is that, at the violent climax, the Professor embraces Peter in a fit of sexual excitement, an act which repulses the young man, causing him to jump from the lion and take his chance with the crowd.[142]

Although his publishers had some objections, Hanley was most insistent on the inclusion of his Professor whose 'phantasmagorical appearance and vanishing' was intended to give the chapter a certain 'queerness' (Hanley/Parsons, 18 7 34, p. 48). His greater significance is revealed later, however, when Peter is further embroiled in a street clash with armed troops. This time, it is Sheila who guides the latter through the streets and the atmosphere is charged equally with the *frisson* of sexuality and physical danger. As the two figures are caught up in the crossfire of guns and rudimentary weapons, Sheila falls to the ground, spattered with the blood of a young man, whose chest oozes 'a veritable fountain' (Hanley, 1935a, p. 499). Although unharmed, her 'expressionless' face surrounded by its 'welter of blood' resembles the pallor of a corpse, making Peter's return with her to the house 'through dark passages, through entries' evocative of both the Orphic myth and some heroic rescue from a front-line offensive (pp. 500-501). In the succeeding pages of the chapter, the dark figure of the Professor hovers in the form of a disembodied voice, goading Peter toward the sexual act, which takes the form of a kind of blood rite, mingling feelings of revulsion and elation; contamination - 'Oh! the blood!' - and purification - 'When had he knelt like this before? Ah yes! When he had received his first Communion' (pp. 501-503). It is significant that those complex motivations are prompted within the social parameter or chronotope of public space in which '*crisis,*

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[142] Cf. Professor Warschauer (Waremme) in Wassermann's *The Maurizius Case*, a predatory homosexual who, to the 17 year old Etzel von Andergast, is both dubious mentor and initiator into the city's iniquities:

> Warschauer had a passion for all sorts of human assemblies, whether processions, public exhibitions, demonstrations of strikers or mere street gatherings; the crowd had for him an irresistible attraction. He was happiest in confined spaces, when he was wedged in amongst thousands of his fellows, and skilful speakers were exciting the mob to fanatical demonstrations; and he explained to Etzel that what he enjoyed was the intoxication of the bliss of depersonalization and anonymity. (Wassermann, 1930, p. 233)

radical change, an unexpected turn of fate takes place, where decisions are made, where the forbidden line is overstepped, where one is renewed or perishes' (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 169). The voice of the Professor constantly projects the contradictory imperatives of desire and duty out of the anathema of violent extremes. The batons and flames of the riot and the horrific sight of the dead boy provoke the emotional crisis point - *that fountain of blood keeps bursting up, taking fire, that burning sword* - around which contradictory meanings are generated, questions raised. Sexuality in Hanley is finely balanced on the borderline between the prison house of guilt and the free space of liberation; the act which either propels Peter into the '*social rottenness*', where '*ideals are stinking in the heap*' or guides him toward '*that flashing light* [which] *clouds out everything*' (Hanley, 1935a, p. 507).

The acting out of fundamental dilemmas - the struggle for new kinds of social relation beyond the communal parameters - had been a significant component in Hanley's modernism since *Drift*. Indeed it is Desmond who re-echoes the anti-clerical voice of Joe Rourke, taking up the even stronger position that 'all priests should be burnt' and daring to marry 'out of the chapel' (Hanley, 1935a, pp. 383, 110). However, it is particularly Peter's transgression of Catholic moral codes which recalls the emergent modernist precursors of the European anti-hero: a textual ambivalence in which individual expressions of moral antipathy, superiority or social alienation confront the established mores of community. As Grossman has established, both Balzac and Dostoevsky presage the Nietzschean doctrine of the superman in their posing of the moral question of whether it is right to commit the single reprehensible act for the greater human benefit (Grossman, 1975, pp. 22-39). The intellectual justification for Raskolnikov's murder of the old woman is directly inspired by the similar dilemma facing Rastignac in *Père Goriot*. In Balzac's novel, what initially proposes itself as a justification for personal greed, is transformed by Vautrin into a philosophical right of transgression, guaranteed to the superior individual who lives, 'in a loftier sphere than other men do':

> 'A man, in short, is everything to me or just nothing at all. Less than nothing if his name happens to be Poiret: you can crush him like a bug, he is flat and he is offensive. But a man is a god when he is like you; he is not a machine covered with a skin, but a theatre in which the greatest sentiments are displayed - great

> thoughts and feelings - and for these, and these only, I live...' (Balzac, 1908, p. 176)

Similarly, in *Crime and Punishment*, the reasoned, intellectual argument for the act's justification seems to emerge defiantly from all the emotional and moral turmoil in which Raskolnikov is immersed throughout the novel:

> 'Crime? What crime?' he exclaimed in a sudden frenzy. 'That I killed a nasty harmful, wicked louse, an old hag of a moneylender, a woman who was of no use to anybody, for whose murder a score of sins should be forgiven, a woman who made the life of the poor a hell on earth... (Dostoevsky, 1968, p. 84)[143]

Hanley's *The Secret Journey* similarly invokes the predatory spectre of usury as that which most suitably deserves social scorn and vengeance. The description of the moneylender is comparably dehumanizing:

> Ugh! I'd like to choke this **thing** now. Right now! This big fleshy greasy creature, who thinks she is loved. I want to laugh. I want to yell in her face. [...] It's all this sliminess that has followed me from Ireland. That's what it is. We are as good as anybody else in Hatfields, or Gelton - as good as anybody else in the world. (Hanley, 1938a, pp. 408-9, emphasis added)

One final similarity which connects all three versions is the way that the murder itself is eventually committed more as a result of chance than because of any calculated decision. Hanley's murder is occasioned by the contingent factor of the knife, yet, although his version very much echoes those of Balzac and Dostoevsky, it differs in one significant

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[143] Cf again Wassermann's *The Maurizius Case*, in which Professor Warschauer relates how a young Chicago slum-dweller had murdered his persistently abusive and brutal father:

> He had not done anything wrong; he had sent a vile beast out of the world, nothing more; the world was a better place to live in with that brute no longer in it; the deed deserved praise, not punishment; not imprisonment, no, no, no! (Wassermann, 1930, p. 334)

sense.[144] Both of his literary forebears prepare the reader for the event with a series of lengthy discourses on the moral and philosophical causations or consequences; yet rather than as a result of any single discernible cause, or motivation, Peter's final act arises out of the accumulation of emotional and social detail. Truth content, therefore is not a given, but is to be discovered in the relation between the varying vocal or discursive positions, which in Hanley are conveyed primarily through their expressive impact. Thus, if the act is Peter's compulsive attempt to expiate Catholic guilt, it is causally related not only to his dereliction of filial and devotional duty but to the resulting dependency of his mother on the moneylender. However, that cannot be contemplated in isolation from an evident desire for social as well as familial vengeance, since Mrs Ragner's power is directly linked to the economic oppression of Gelton's working class.[145] The complexity of motivation is intensified when, immediately before the murder, Peter's sexual jealousy and class envy are provoked by him witnessing Sheila engaged in her 'profession' with a conspicuously wealthy 'client', but finally, as his anti-colonialist *cri-de-coeur* reveals, the act is committed out of a deep sense of racial or collective grievance. In such a textual layering, the working out of personal dilemmas is always represented in terms of their social consequences; a set of determinations which by no means 'finalizes' an authorial explanation of the working-class condition, but which invites instead an indeterminate and complex hermeneutic.

Despite what has here been described as an inherent dialogism in Hanley's writing, a chronological survey of his work, moving beyond the 1930s into the war years and after reveals the constant tension between a perennial openness to cultural complexity, and a compulsion to accede to the imperatives of a unifying or dominant aesthetic. That struggle is paralleled in Hanley's social and political allegiances which were, on the one hand,

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[144] Of course, Balzac's approach is much more oblique and dispassionate, as it is only Rastignac's complicity which is invited and suggested, not his direct participation. The actual murder is committed without his specific consent and, as it were, offstage. Peter's carrying of the knife is psychologically ambivalent: initially in his possession in order to be sold, it is several times dropped and handed back to him before being eventually used in a momentary fit of anger.

[145] See particularly the merciless act of distraint perpetrated by Ragner's henchman, Daniel Corkran (Hanley, 1938a, pp. 143-46).

determined by an instinctive and intellectual solidarity with the ordinary industrial worker and, on the other hand, by a preference for the compensations of a pre-industrial rurality. Consequently, the decades of the 1930s and the Second World War were for Hanley constituted by periods of alternate relative stability and crisis; by political optimism and shattering disillusion, realized at the broadly cultural level as well as that of the textual microcosm. A more comprehensive realization of this complexity is enabled by what has hitherto been subordinated within this thesis: namely the significance for Hanley's work of his biography and, in particular, his association with that other emblematic space: Wales.

PART IV: HANLEY AND WALES

CHAPTER 12. ITINERANCY AND SETTLEMENT: POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL RETREAT

As this is not a 'critical biography', the introduction of a greater biographical element into the present stage of the thesis is not to claim the priority of an empirical interpretation, but to identify the presence in Hanley's writing of what Jameson calls a 'fantasmatic subtext', an 'unconscious master-narrative' which is evidence of an authorial desire for plenitude to compensate for a perennial sense of loss (Jameson, 1989, p. 180). In that sense, Hanley's choice of living space in the remoteness of rural Wales represents a discovery of identity: that of the exile, whose self-imposed distance from the modern world shapes and determines a representation of the past which is increasingly at odds with the present. Yet Hanley's initial authority derives from a general perception of his engagement with modernity, from his 'working-class' or 'proletarian' credentials, and this is the crux of a continuing Hanleyan contradiction concerning his social rôle as a writer. As the initial reaction to his Furys novels shows, some of his legitimacy to write on behalf of his class was called into question by various claims that the language was 'bogus'. Whether it is justified or not, the accusation derives from a misunderstanding of his emancipation project which, although it was conceived, as it were, to represent working-class people as exceptional, to raise their status to an almost mythic level, prompted some critics - particularly those from Liverpool - to ask whether 'several years of authorship [had] destroyed Mr Hanley's sense of how people really talk?'.[146] It has to be said that little reaction of this kind was discernible in the working-class or socialist critics of the Left,[147] yet such 'misreadings' are indicative of the dangers inherent in the

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[146] *The Liverpool Echo*, 13.2.35: for the infamous 'bogus' remark see James Agate in *The Daily Express*, 7.2.35.

[147] The chief admirers of *The Furys* on the Left were the three Ralphs: Fox (see Hanley's reminiscence of him at the Paris Writers Conference: Hanley, L, 1979), Wright (*The Daily Worker*, December 35) and Bates (*Time and Tide*, 2 2 35). However the Left was not consistently enthusiastic. While his representations of working-class conditions were for some articulating precisely those kinds of social oppression which justified the working-class struggle, they also prompted *Proletkult*-inspired accusations like those of

adoption of particular formal strategies and in claims for a necessary detachment. Hanley's conscious attempts to return to the fundamental priorities of class, both in his writing and in new political commitments are evidence of his recognition of the pitfalls. On the other hand, a perceived need for the physical and intellectual distance of the artist raises questions concerning the author's real communal loyalties and social allegiances.

Finding a Place

Hanley's 'autobiographical fragment', *Broken Water*, ends around 1929 when *Drift* was finally accepted by Eric Partridge's Scholartis Press. It was then that he set out for London to look for work in publishing and to embark seriously on a writer's career. The kind of society he entered in 1930 has been described in the memoirs of a number of his contemporaries, notably H E Bates, Rhys Davies, Rupert Croft-Cooke and Kenneth Hopkins, all of whom testify to the generosity and eccentricity of Charlie Lahr,[148] the migrant German bibliophile, who provided for Hanley both accommodation at his Muswell Hill house and publication opportunities through numerous London contacts. Although Hanley had enjoyed the company of this côterie of left-leaning writers and artists it was not a cohesive and politically homogeneous group:[149]

> There was nothing in the least comradely about the writers who came to Red Lion

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fellow proletarian Leslie Halward (see p. 230, note 192) and of Alec Brown's confrere, Philip Henderson who considered *Daughters of Albion* 'far more effective proletarian art than, for instance, the novels of James Hanley, where the world appears as a pointless turmoil of brutality, sadism and degradation' (Henderson, 1935, p. 38).

[148] See Davies, 1969, pp. 114-117; Bates, 1971, pp. 52-57; Hopkins, 1954, pp. 96-131; Croft-Cooke, 1963, pp. 90-132. See also Jack Lindsay's *Fanfrolico and After* which tells of an all-night drinking session when Tommy Earp (an editor of *The New Coterie*) O'Flaherty, Davies and Lahr were present: according to Lindsay, the night on which Lahr always claimed his daughter was conceived. Both Croft-Cooke and Lindsay, particularly, represent the Bohemian London life of the mid-1920s to early 1930s as drunken debauched and generally hedonistic (Lindsay, 1962, pp. 136,137).

[149] Among Lahr's circle of acquaintances was Nancy Cunard for whose family shipping company Hanley's father had always worked at subsistence level. She smoothed Hanley's literary entry into London with an introduction to Allen Lane (see Chapter 9, p. 132) and the gift of a typewriter (Harrington, 1989, p. 28). Consequently, *Boy* was dedicated to her.

> Street, each was, naturally enough, deeply concerned with his own work or with himself. There was certainly no common movement or clique...
> (Croft-Cooke, 1963, p. 132)

In any case Hanley, with his characteristic reserve,[150] was never inclined toward cliques and was rather pre-occupied throughout his brief time in London with concurrent writing projects for Lahr and C J Greenwood, and various ideas for novels.[151] Money was always in short supply and, as there was no prospect of a job, he did rely to some extent on the philanthropy of others.[152] During the summer of 1930, he repaid some of this generosity in kind by looking after Lahr's two children - Oonagh and Sheila - while Esther was in hospital, undergoing a 'serious operation' (Hanley/E. Lahr (a) *c.* July 1930). However, Hanley's enthusiasm for the children, often expressed in subsequent letters to Lahr was clearly motivated, not only by an avuncular inclination, but by his evident guilt feelings about Esther. She and Hanley had had an affair round about May 1930 - Charles would have been at the shop all day - prompted, so Sheila later claimed, by her mother's romantic nostalgia for the sea of her Portsmouth childhood (Leslie, 18 5 92). The picture painted of Hanley by the Lahr matrilineal memories is of a rather dashing, romantic adventurer, far from his self-characterization as a rather dour recluse.[153] According to Oonagh, Esther had been 'in love with Hanley' (Lahr, 1992)

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[150] Hanley was particularly sensitive to the possibility of betrayal in personal relationships and, although he could be engagingly garrulous in company, always claimed that he preferred a reclusive existence. See author's interview with Richard Jones for evidence of Hanley's humour and *Broken Water* for Hanley's decision after the First World War that, as a result of the 'deep effect' a shipmate's betrayal had had, he would for the next ten years 'make no more friends' (Hanley, 1937a, pp. 244-245).

[151] As already outlined in Chapter 9 pp. 124-136.

[152] Greenwood certainly put him up for a time (Lambert & Radcliffe, 1987, p. 273). However, the extent of Lahr's generosity was uncertain: any cheques drawn against the Lahrs' account was in lieu of payment for board and lodging which Hanley intended to pay out of his author's fee for *The Last Voyage* (see Hanley/Steele, 25 8 30, No.5). Joiner & Steele eventually published the story in March 1931 in their 'Furnival Books' series of limited editions, an imprint they took over from William Jackson.

[153] One of the stories that Sheila recalls her mother telling is of how Hanley climbed down a drainpipe on the outside of the house carrying the infant Oonagh. Subsequently, Hanley would always mention the girls in his letters to both Charles and Esther -

and it was possible that the feeling was not returned, since by July he was writing to Boswell at his prospective publishers, The Bodley Head, for £25 'on account' in order to get away to north Wales for a holiday 'with a friend' (Hanley/Boswell, 16 7 30, p. 8) who, from a letter to Lahr, appears to have been a man with C.P. connections named Brown.[154] In the event, Hanley did not leave for Penrhyn Bay, Llandudno until October and stayed there in a cottage rented from a Lancashire landlord till the beginning of February 1931, making intermittent visits to Liverpool and London. It was from here that he told Lahr of his plans for a cultural pilgrimage to Vienna, in preparation for which he was learning the language from a young German, all the while keeping to a rigorously self-imposed writing programme (Hanley/Lahr, 27 1 31, No. 1). In February, he was off again to Torquay by invitation, but was soon bored by a town 'full of people in bath chairs' and by late March had found himself a 'modern cottage' in the hamlet of Tynant, near Corwen in Merionethshire (now Clwyd).[155] Here was Hanley's idyll, where he

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particularly Oonagh - to whom he even dedicated *The Last Voyage*. It does seem odd that Hanley should dedicate a story of death at sea to one so young but he merely explained to Alan Steele that it was 'to a child - I love her' (Hanley/Steele, *c.* Dec 1930, No. 11). It is significant that in his fiction the preferred female characters are either pre-pubescent innocents (Sheila Moynihan) or mother-figures (Fanny Fury). Sexually active women are inevitably flawed or 'fallen' - prostitutes (Sheila Fury) or virtual whores (Maureen in *Our Time is Gone*). Of his few fond memories of the War, the one that stands out is his brief and touching friendship with the five-year-old daughter of a farmer at his billet close to the front (See Hanley, 1937a, pp. 239-240).

[154] This was almost certainly a communist friend of C J Greenwood, the writer and critic Alec Brown, a founder member of the British Section of the Writers International. At the inaugural conference in February 1934 he argued for the universal proletarianization of writing:

> *LITERARY ENGLISH FROM CAXTON TO US IS AN ARTIFICIAL JARGON OF THE RULING CLASS; WRITTEN ENGLISH BEGINS WITH US.*
> (*Left Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1934, p. 77)

Brown put his theories into practice in his eighth novel *Daughters of Albion*, Boriswood, 1935, 'a deliberately artless novel, full of colloquialisms and simplified punctuation' (Croft, 1990, p. 141), and an example of the 'proletarian' literature to which Orwell 'took exception': 'written, like all other "proletarian" literature, by a member of the middle classes' (Orwell, 1968, p. 258).

[155] There is some textual corroboration of Hanley's embarrassment and difficulties with the Lahr family at this time: while in Torquay Hanley writes to Charlie Lahr that

could find the peace to write, sufficiently remote from the Lahrs, far from metropolitan entanglements, yet only thirty miles from his parents' home in Liverpool.

Figure 5: Penllwyn, Tynant, 1992

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he is still keen on the Vienna trip, yet turns down an invitation to join Esther on a cruise organized by Nancy Cunard on the grounds that he has set himself a 'programme of work' and was therefore 'not going in for cruising or any other kind of travel'. (Hanley/Lahr,C (b), 20 3 31 & Hanley/ Lahr,E, (b) *c*. Feb 1931)

The group of four cottages called Penllwyn was built by the Hiraethog District Council for local labourers in 1929 (Figure 5). In the event, there were no local applicants, a surprising, but not uncommon, occurrence since rents for the new council properties then being built all over rural Britain were often beyond the reach of its workers, whose wages had actually decreased during the slump in the agricultural economy of the 1920s (Mowat, 1968, pp. 252-255).[156] Hanley was the first to move in, followed by three other sets of occupants all from outside the area, including a dress-maker from Denbigh and three elderly sisters from Kent, the daughters of a doctor (Hughes, 1992). Hanley looked back on this time as his first encounter with the discrete charm of the Welsh, whose 'innate sense of courtesy' extended to a reluctance on the part of rent collectors to collect their dues (Hanley, L, 1979). It is significant that Hanley of all the initial tenants was the only one who was actually working-class yet, ironically, one who was beginning to leave that original social identity behind.

Hanley had only been here a few months when he suddenly announced to his friends and publishers in London that he was desperately in need of money due to his forthcoming marriage (e.g. Hanley/Raymond, 11 5 31, No. 488). Dorothy Enid Thomas (Timmy) was, at the time of her meeting with James, married to a garage-owner in Betws-Y-Coed (Jones, 1993).[157] Yet, as Hanley wrote to Henry Raymond, Timmy's social origins were far removed from the provincial petit-bourgeoisie:

> I never meant I should touch the Aristocracy with a barge-pole, but I actually married the 3rd cousin of the Earl of Ancaster. Of course, I ran away with her in the traditional manner. Still one can overcome such embarrassments.

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[156] Hanley paid 8 shillings a week. An agricultural labourer's wages could be as little as 30 shillings (Hanley, L, 1979; Mowat, 1968, p. 252). A report issued in 1930 estimated that the poverty line wage in 1926-28 for a working-class family of four was £38*s*. 6*d* a week (Hannington, 1940, p. 89).

[157] They were not actually married when she moved into the cottage in May. On the 25th of April 1934, Hanley re-assigned his royalties to Timmy under what was still her legal name, 'Dorothy Enid Thomas' (Bodley Head file marked '*Boy, Aria and Finale*') They had, however, been through some kind of symbolic ceremony as the contemporary photographs of James in an uncharacteristic suit and wide-brimmed hat indicate. They were not formally married until 1947.

(Hanley/Raymond, 22 6 31, No. 494)[158]

Despite the ironic tone, Hanley is clearly impressed by his new-found connections, which mark the beginning of a change in his class identity. Although ostensibly it would appear that Timmy Hanley's new home (like Sheila's in *The Furys*) signalled a social descent from the provincial gentility of Betws, there was a local perception that she introduced into the Hanley household a whole new set of social customs and practices. From the beginning they were both recognized as being very 'different' from anyone who lived locally. Jane Hughes (née Owen) was the young daughter at the neighbouring farm, Ty Cerrig, when Hanley moved in and remembers 'Mr and Mrs Hanley' returning from their 'honeymoon'. 'Mrs Hanley' was considered 'more of a lady than Mr Hanley'; an artist and an accomplished pianist - who had installed in the front room of the council house her own small grand piano.[159] Also in the house there many records of classical music which Jane used to listen to with Timmy when James was away. Gramophones were practically unknown to the local community; a luxury very few could afford (Hughes, 1992). That local impression was shared by her brother-in-law, Emyr Roberts, who then drove his family's delivery van and operated a car-hire service. He also considered Mrs Hanley 'a lady', a status which was confirmed for him when, on several occasions, he took Mrs Hanley to Chester - 36 miles away - in his taxi. Her usual destination was Brown's huge department store - 'a well known word in this locality', the opulent nearest equivalent to Harrods or Selfridges (Roberts, 1992).

Yet there were other factors which singled them out. Jane Hughes remembers Hanley often calling to borrow sugar, bread, stamps - even money, payment for which would always be settled by cheque, invariably postdated by two weeks to a month. When asked by the young Jane why he would use such a method, her mother was at pains to provide a reason, since as far as she knew, they had plenty of money. In fact, the Hanleys,

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[158] Her maiden name was Dorothy Enid Heathcote, daughter of an industrialist whose wife claimed descent from Bennet Langton, patron of Oliver Goldsmith and lifelong friend of Samuel Johnson.

[159] Jane has in her possession a drawing by Timmy of their son Liam when a child, which bears a remarkable resemblance to Milne's drawings of Christopher Robin.

throughout their married life which ended with Timmy's death in 1980, had relatively little money - as the numerous letters to prospective benefactors and the constant submissions of stories and plays will confirm.[160] Nevertheless, the social expediency of service - having things done on their behalf, sending others on errands - became customary with the Hanleys: the young Jane would be sent to buy their cigarettes at the local shop, Tecwyn Lloyd remembers going to the post office, even visitors were inevitably subject to their manorial regime.[161] Indeed, the most significant evidence of a difference in social attitude was the fact they would have a maid come several times a week to cook and clean. Mrs Hanley, Jane Hughes observed, was not keen on housework, the house was frequently very untidy. Furthermore they aroused local controversy with their unconventional practice of leaving their child Liam (born in 1933) out in the pram at all times, even during the winter. 'People round here looked upon that as the wrong thing to do', was Emyr Roberts summation of local disapproval, even though, as he explained, a hot water bottle was used in the cold weather (Hughes, Roberts, 1992).

All of which was part of a perceived social difference in the Hanleys, who represented the perplexing yet engaging world of 'the gentry'. Hanley himself, of course, did not speak nor dress like a gentleman, yet he too was considered to be someone apart. Emyr Roberts recalled that 'he used to walk about a lot', something in itself which marked Hanley as

> eccentric - quite different to all of us [...] a dreamer - well he was lost in his work. It's difficult to describe, but he was [...] a scholar - that put him in a different class. [Like] schoolmasters, for instance, the sort of people who you would turn to for information - even to write a letter. A gentleman like that - who could write books - was in a higher class. (Roberts, 1992)

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[160] One of the reasons why so much modern manuscript material is collected at London University is that the bulk of it is constituted by the bequest of Louis Sterling, the wealthy bibliophile collector who owned EMI. Charles Lahr would frequently respond to the desperate cries for financial assistance from his author friends by approaching Sterling, who bought original manuscripts for quite reasonable sums. Hanley, Davies, Bates, T F Powys, and many others benefited in this way.

[161] See Kenneth Hopkins's account of his visit to them in 1938 when he, too, was not only set to weeding the garden but also sent to the village for stamps and tobacco, for which he was paid by post-dated cheque (Hopkins, 1954, pp. 92,93).

What also set the Hanleys apart was the level of their social interaction within the community. While most of their day-to-day contact with local hill-farmers and neighbours was at the level of 'service', their social allegiances were observed to be primarily with other newcomers or visitors. Jane Hughes remembers John Cowper Powys (who had recently moved to nearby Corwen) visiting Hanley wearing 'plus-fours',[162] and his younger brothers, Frank (a schoolteacher) and Gerry (also later a novelist) being similarly dressed; again, to her, the ostensible signifiers of 'gentry' (Hughes. 1992). Yet the Hanleys were seldom observed to be gregarious. Jane Hughes also has in her possession a copy of Hugh Evans's *Cwm Eithin*,[163] inscribed by James Hanley to her mother in Welsh, in recognition of the lessons she had given him in her own language. Yet Hanley's interest seems to have been more literary than social. He would never, for instance, attend local concerts, eisteddfods, or agricultural shows.[164] It has already been described how Hanley himself had grown to be reserved, reclusive even in childhood - a shy, quiet man as Tecwyn Lloyd discovered (Lloyd, 1992) - and the remoteness of rural Wales seems to have exacerbated an increasingly obsessive need for privacy:

> When Mr Hanley was engaged in writing a book, you couldn't get anything out of him... he was truly lost in his work. And he was a very moody gentleman at that time. (Roberts, 1992)

Despite the advantage of its isolation, Penllwyn was becoming too small for the family requirements. In September 1934 Hanley wrote to Henry Raymond, his new publisher at Chatto & Windus, requesting a lump sum of £150 in advance on the expected sale of *The Furys*, in order to take advantage of 'a golden opportunity' to buy a house. The reasons given for the urgency to leave were 'the altered circumstances of the child' and 'the size

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[162] However, in Powys's letter to the Hanleys in 1939, he shares Timmy's loathing of Betws-y-Coed: all 'picture card charlatans and people in plus-fours' (Powys/Hanley, 7 11 39, No. 57).

[163] Translated as *The Gorse Glen*, by E. Morgan Humphreys, Liverpool: The Brython Press, 1948.

[164] This is despite the photograph, printed in Frank G Harrington's memorial booklet, of James Hanley and John Cowper Powys at an unspecified Eisteddfod at which they were created 'bards' (Harrington, 1989, fp. 14).

of the cottage', causing Hanley to 'work under great inconvenience' (Hanley/Raymond, 20 9 34, No. 73).[165] The new house was a former Wesleyan vicarage, built in 1913, called 'Bryn Derwen' which still has its separate stable and tack room, with space for a live-in coachman. It lies on the South Bala Road (known as the Llandrillo Road) in the village of Cynwyd, a few miles south of Corwen (Figure 6). The new move reflected Hanley's confidence in the contract with his new publishers - for at least four books - which promised a steady increase in personal prosperity. The following year was to be what was probably the most successful of Hanley's career, with *The Furys* selling 6,600 copies in America by October. It is not surprising that by December Hanley was announcing a move back to Tynant, this time to an even bigger house, Glan Ceirw, an impressive old mansion by the River Ceirw in five acres of ground. According to Jane Hughes, Glan Ceirw was much more in Mrs Hanley's class: 'a little mansion, owned previously by a very rich man', so large that only part of it was furnished (Figure 7). Jane used to take milk to them each morning before going to school and regularly was asked to go to the house to play with Liam while Mrs Hanley went to Corwen on the bus. Such a service was indeed an extra since at Glan Ceirw, they also had a resident servant - a young girl called Mary Hughes - who had been engaged to look after Liam and do the housework (Hughes, 1992).[166] Thus, within the space of five years, James Hanley had, in terms of residency and style of living, moved up through the structural layers of the British class system to assume social position close to that of a 'gentleman'.[167]

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[165] Evidence of Chatto's confidence in Hanley is the fact that the cheque was promptly sent on the 30th, four months in advance of the publication date. Such an act was further endorsed in January by the news that the U.S. publishers Macmillan & Co. wanted to sign Hanley for *The Furys* at a £400 advance - a huge sum at the time - on the recommendation of the novelists L A G Strong and Winifred Holtby (Hanley/ Raymond, 30 9 34, No. 78; Raymond/Hanley, 31 1 35, Nos. 598,599).

[166] It was during this time that Gerald Hanley had been to Africa to work on the sheep farm of William Powys (brother of J C) and had shot a 'tiger' (sic) whose trophied head was hanging in the Glan Ceirw's huge front room (Ibid).

[167] Hanley's letter to Henry Raymond reveals a characteristic ambivalence. Having made the admission that he feels 'much like a squire' at Glan Ceirw, it is immediately qualified with the words 'though a very dirty one I'm afraid... always filthy'. As he continues to depict an active life of gardening, fishing, tending the henhouse, walking on the moor amongst the local fauna, an identity emerges of ordinary countryman or yeoman rather than squire:

Figure 6: Bryn Derwen, Cynwyd, photographed in 1992

Figure 7: Glan Ceirw, near Corwen, photographed in 1992

Although, given his childhood propensities, it was inevitable that Hanley would seek isolation in natural or quasi-natural environments, his initial move to rural Wales had a much wider cultural and social significance. Firstly, it was ideologically part of a widespread inter-war dissatisfaction with the disadvantages of urban living, which led to various kinds of escape, both actual and spiritual, from the turmoil of modernity to a Britain of an older, more secure past.[168] Martin J Wiener has chronicled the history of a contradictory cultural ideology which divorces the environmental devastations of industrialism from its economic benefits, a paradoxical bi-product of capitalism whereby the latter despises the material consequences of its own relentless exploitations of the world's resources. A national pride in industry and progress is thus displaced by the alternative values inherent in country living and rural pursuits; yet the implications of such cultural preferences extend beyond a 'love of nature' or revivals of ancient pastimes and customs to a nostalgia for a dubious social order which a modern democracy has rendered obsolete (See Wiener, 1987, *passim* and particularly pp. 41-80). In other words, although the process is not strictly inevitable, British intellectual movements - from William Morris to D H Lawrence - which have relied on rurality as the social ideal have for the greater part been in danger of reviving the ancient spectre of feudalism.

Secondly, Hanley's love of rural life was part of his conviction that such an environment was important for the artist's necessary isolation. In that sense Hanley's social mobility represents a pursuit, not so much of those values of aristocratic detachment, but of what for him constituted the *sine qua non* of the writer's life: the freedom from the quotidian routines and duties of ordinary existence. Therefore, what

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> With five acres of ground there is always lots to do, but I always enjoy this after brain work [...] here the air is like wine - practically live in it all seasons[...] I never wear a collar and tie - shave once a week - would never be taken for an author. (Hanley/Raymond, 26 10 36, No. 556)

[168] Such a word as 'turmoil' was current in a growing inter-war culture of anti-industrialism and bore a close ideological relation to the Edwardian 'abyss' as in Forster's *Howards End* (Forster, 1975, p. 58) and Hanley's adoption of it in *Drift*. Others often occurring in journalistic writings, in both popular and high-cultural novels, were 'welter', 'maelstrom', 'ant-heap'. All of which testify to a feeling of being at the hands of forces beyond individual human control.

might appear at first sight to be a vulgar collusion in *ancien régime* values is rooted in a landed form of another Hanleyan ideology: his chronic romanticism. Just as Martin J Wiener and others have written about the persistence of older values in modern industrial societies,[169] so Frank Kermode has identified a parallel tradition of romanticism in modernist aesthetics. If Hanley colludes, wittingly or not, in a revival of aristocratic social relations, then it is an effect (not the cause) of a perceived necessity for the artist to be 'cut off in one way or another [...] as a preparation for the "vision"':

> He must be lonely, haunted, victimised, devoted to suffering rather than action - or, to state this in a manner more acceptable to the twentieth century, he is exempt from the normal human orientation towards action and so enabled to intuit those images which are truth, in defiance of the triumphant claims of merely intellectual disciplines. (Kermode, 1961, p. 6)

Similarly, Hanley's stipulation of the necessary conditions for the artist's ideal function is that he or she should always remain on society's margins:

> I've always felt myself that the writer's real home is on the fringe of society, I mean I've never felt myself that I could even live in society [...] this is why I've always been a loner. You know, by inclination I'm strongly Melvillian. (Hanley, L, 1979)

The evocation of Melville - the solitary 'man in the Customs House' as Hanley later described his literary predecessor[170] - is a characteristic Hanleyan idealization of the artist, that very 'lonely, haunted, victimised' figure whom Kermode identifies, for despite the discovery of a life-partner and constant supporter in Timmy, he continued to affect and even cultivate the identity of the solitary, the 'neglected genius', the unsung and uncompromising practitioner of his art.

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[169] As well as Jameson's essay on Balzac see also Arno J Mayer, who argues that a European-wide pre-1789 aristocratic hegemony had been the primary factor in a chronically unresolved political crisis (Mayer, 1981).

[170] See 'A Man in the Customs House', Hanley's identification of his own isolated existence with that of Melville and the persona of the eponymous Bartleby of the latter's short story (Hanley, 1983, pp. 72-79; Melville, 1985, p. 83).

Yet thirdly and most important of all, Hanley's move to rural Wales acted out the 'fantasm' of a spiritual homecoming to a pre-industrial familial past, before his family's fatal exile to 'mainland' Britain. An actual return was ruled out due to Timmy's and James's parental attachments,[171] but Wales was of course another home of the Celts, a race with whose indomitable spirit Hanley continued to identify, primarily through its 'powerful' women like his fictional matriarch, Fanny Fury (Hanley/Green, 22 5 33, No. 546) but also through his awareness of its poetic traditions. Announcing their move to Glan Ceirw, Hanley explained that:

> the name means 'the glade where stood the deer.' All Welsh names are short poetical descriptions. Apart from the Irish the Welsh must be the most poetical race alive. (Hanley/Raymond, 27 2 36, No. 451)

It also represented the space of the untrammelled natural world, from whose distance the modern one could be critically viewed. Written from here, in what he called his 'Welsh fastness', Hanley's writings on the industrial world become increasingly condemnatory; as he writes to Tom Jones, a bookseller and collector and one of the few connections he still maintained with Liverpool:[172]

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[171] Although he did express a fantasy of that ultimate journey to Henry Yorke (the novelist Henry Green) when he advised him in the event of war 'to pack up and return with me to Ireland, which is going to be the only harbour for people who won't have their lives interfered with' (Hanley/Green, 22 5 33, No. 546).

[172] Tom Jones, like Lahr, was a great help to Hanley in procuring buyers for his manuscripts and books during his 1930s lean periods (e.g. his original Alan Odle drawings in February 1934). He was also part of the small phalanx of those who provided services, such as tobacco, typewriter ribbons and paper, even on one occasion a hat. (See e.g. Hanley/Jones, 5 10 32; 15 1 33; 27, 2 34; 25 11 35). From 1934 onwards, by which time all his family had left Liverpool to live in Forest Hill with Hanley's younger brother Frank (Hanley/Jones, 1 1 34) he gradually severed most of his connections with the place. He had been consistently disappointed with unfavourable reviews in the Liverpool press and was of the firm conviction that a prophet is without honour in his own country. As early as 1932, Hanley had instructed The Bodley Head not to send any review copies to the Liverpool papers who had ignored his *Men in Darkness* (Hanley/Boswell, May 1932, No. 83). For *The Furys* blurb he asks for the wording to be changed from 'Liverpool Irish family' to 'working-class family' (Hanley/Boswell, 8 1 35, No. 591) and in retaliation for John Brophy's 'bias, lack of honesty, or [...] mere vacuity' (Hanley, 8 2 35) repeated the injunction on review copies for *The Secret Journey*, (Hanley/Raymond,

> The more I study the people of today, the more I like the people of yesterday, and this isn't being old fashioned, but strikes at the core of one of the deepest instincts of humans. Lots of people think a pile about instigators and all the amorphous mass of modern isms, but I prefer vegetating with Nature. (Hanley/ Jones, 25 11 35)

The 'people of yesterday' clearly refers to his growing identification with his new-found environment. In the autumn of 1936, he was made bard at a local eisteddfod, along with a fellow born-again Celt, John Cowper Powys, and announced to Henry Raymond that he was by then 'pretty well up in Welsh history':

> I like the Welsh even better than the Irish. They have imagination, good manners, though they are crafty, too. They have had great men - Hywel Dda for instance, whose first laws the English based theirs on.[173] (Hanley/Raymond, 26 10 36, Nos. 556,557)

This consciousness of an alternative sense of lineage and literary tradition, and of the Utopian possibilities of the lived ideal, is what underlies an increasing emphasis in Hanley's writing - already discernible in *The Furys* saga - on an older set of pre-industrial values which constitute an implicit critique of the modern world. Yet equally, there were other pre-occupations.

Politics and Letters

Despite Hanley's growing affinities with a version of the past, he himself admitted to Henry Yorke that any assumption of a radical position - or even a conservative one - paradoxically demands that initial break which is the necessary catalyst to new discoveries. As the tone of Hanley's letter implies, Yorke had either complained of his

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15 6 36, Nos. 527,528).

[173] *The Laws of Hywel Dda* were supposedly written under the auspices of Hywel Dda (Hywel the Good), a 10th-century Welsh King. According to Saunders Lewis, 'the Welsh Laws are one of the pinnacles of European culture, not only on account of the body of law they contain but also because they are a literary masterpiece which directly influenced the form and style of Welsh prose' (Stephens, 1986, p. 338). Hanley in later life revered both Lewis, 20th-century founder of Plaid Cymru, and *The Laws* as among his Welsh literary favourites (Hanley, L, 1979).

lot as the inheritor of his family's business responsibilities or was thinking of giving them up:

> Parents are the devil [...]don't parents want to be their children's hands. Draw forever. One has to say to oneself, 'It is a fact. A hard undeniable, unclenching fact. I <u>hate</u> my life.' Of course you do. Everybody does. Is it worth taking the plunge? Of course, at least one would have satisfied oneself years later [...] that act might be the more illuminating part of your past, outshining everything else. The mere fact that you did what you wanted to and satisfied yourself.
> (Hanley/Green, 16 11 33, No. 514)

In this declaration, is expressed again the other pole of the Hanleyan dialectic, the modern compulsion to break away from the determining and shaping values of the past, to embrace the imperatives of the present. Those impulses are realized, not only in Hanley's declarative modernism, but also in his struggles with the social and political forces of modernity itself. Certainly, what remained with Hanley, whatever his sometimes inconsistent and contradictory responses, was a chronic sense of grievance. If Hanley's will to isolation can be considered a distorted perception, refracted through the ideology of romanticism, it is nevertheless justified to the extent that Hanley was very often ill-served by the capriciousness of metropolitan reviewers and publishers and it is clear from Hanley's letters that he suffered from bouts of severe depression when beset by frustrations to his writer's ambitions. On more than one occasion during the thirties Hanley was ready to throw up the whole business of writing and return to what he suspected might have been his true vocation, the sea.[174] The vicissitudes of Hanley's

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[174] The first occasion had been during September 1931 when he was depressed over not getting 'Boy' accepted by The Bodley Head, a mood exacerbated by his recent physical altercation with Charles Lahr in the office of Alan Steele (of Joiner & Steele). Having recently learnt of Hanley's affair with Esther, Lahr - tall and physically imposing - had knocked the tough yet relatively diminutive Hanley 'clean over the waste-paper basket'. Soon after, working again on the war novel, 'The Inferno', Hanley wrote to Steele:

> As soon as that is finished, I am finished too. I am giving up writing altogether and going back to sea again - the place where I really belong.
> (Hanley/ Steele, 8 9 31, No. 36)

Hanley's fear was that Steele - a close personal friend - had been deeply offended by the

relationships with his professional colleagues, already adumbrated in Chapters 8 and 9, were to continue in a repeated pattern of initial high expectation followed by eventual disappointment throughout his writing career.

After Hanley's problems with John Lane's Bodley Head, it was the small and apparently more audacious firm of Boriswood, run by his friend C J Greenwood (to whom he had dedicated *Ebb and Flood*) which held out the prospect of a resolution both of Hanley's contractual and censorship difficulties. Yet what seemed initially the actions of a supportive and innovative group were to be the source of a life-long bitterness and resentment. The relationship began in a mood of mutual generosity. With the permission of Lane, Greenwood had already resolved the earlier impasse of 'Boy' by publishing it in a 'full' limited edition, and a further expurgated version in September 1931.[175] They again stepped in to release Hanley from his obligations to write a third book for The Bodley Head - which as far as he was concerned he had done in producing the unacceptable 'Sheila Moynihan' - by agreeing to repay to the publishers £75 he had already received as an advance by March 1933 (Bond/Boswell, 6 3 33). To move from a mainstream to a relatively minor imprint may have seemed prestigiously disastrous for an author, but it had the advantage that Hanley was enthusiastically supported by 'friends'. However by July 1933 - one month after the publication of his third volume with Boriswood, *Captain Bottell* - Hanley was 'absolutely desperate', writing to Alan Steele for an immediate loan of £10 because, as a result of the poor sales of his novel, they had reduced his weekly payments. According to Hanley, Boriswood turned out 'swines and bastards', and they had had 'a terrific row' (Hanley/Steele, 8 7 33, No. 91). The author accused them in return of using him: that their payments of £3 per week were

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'Lahr incident', offering as compensation to release his friend from their agreement to publish his short story, 'Stoker Haslett' (Hanley/Steele, Sept 1931, No. 37).

[175] Indeed there seems to have been a consistently amicable relationship between C J Greenwood and The Bodley Head since Boriswood were also allowed to issue one month before *Ebb and Flood*, (August 1932) a small collection of three stories, *Aria and Finale*, comprising two reprints 'The Last Voyage', 'Stoker Haslett' and the eponymous story, later reprinted as 'Captain Cruickshank' (Hanley, 1937c, pp. 313-358). Boriswood eventually was taken over by The Bodley Head in 1937, when Greenwood was appointed Manager (Lambert and Ratcliffe, 1987, p. 272).

only a fraction of the proceeds which allowed them 'the privilege of having their pornography published' and that they were 'not willing to give my work the necessary support'. Such was his mood of depression that for the second time he threatened to return to sea (Hanley/Boswell, 11 8 33, No.1).[176] From then until April 1934 followed an acrimonious struggle 'to get free' of the Boriswood contract, involving solicitors, Hanley's insurance company, bank and some desperate financial pleas to friends.[177] Eventually the publishers settled for £300 which was realized on Hanley's insurance policy and he signed with Chatto in May 1934.

Yet this was by no means the end of Hanley's relationship with Greenwood. In November, 1934, the police confiscated from the Bury branch of the National Libraries chain all its copies of *Boy*, which by that time had been issued in four editions. The library proprietors were warned that legal proceedings were to be issued against them as it was considered to be 'an obscene and indecent book' (Franks/Boriswood, 28 11 34). According to *The Manchester Guardian*, police attention had been drawn to its existence 'when they heard that the book was being discussed in clubs in the town' (quoted in Gibbs, 1980, p. 26). A sudden notoriety was surprising, since its thorough expurgation had virtually guaranteed freedom from any unwanted scrutiny and no such discussion had been officially noticed in the three years since its first publication. However, it was the

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[176] An additional cause of distress was that the contract with Boriswood coincided with the birth of the Hanleys' son Liam Powys Hanley, in March 1933. For the confinement, the Hanleys had opted to come to South Kensington for two months from early February, incurring, in addition to the council house rent, a huge weekly expense of £5 - board, lodging, doctors', nurses' and chemist's fees - while Hanley's income was only £3 per week (Hanley/Boswell, 11 8 33, No.1). Hanley was furious with Greenwood and company for failing to provide any extra financial support - e.g. in the form of an increased weekly advance - during a time of great worry and stress (Hanley/Lahr (a) *c* August 1933, No. 11) The question begged of course is, why they thought it necessary to go to such elaborate lengths. Were local facilities so inadequate? It may have been anxiety over Timmy's state of health - she had been prone to illness - yet it was clearly a case where even the regular income of an 'author' could not match the normal expectations of women of her class.

[177] See also letters to Lahr, (a) 16 1 34 No. 13; Green, 18 10 33 No. 550). Boriswood were claiming £500 from Hanley as 'compensation' for the termination of his 5 year contract.

Boriswood decision to issue a cheap edition in a new sexually titillating cover, together with extracts from adverse reviews,[178] which prompted renewed interest and a sale of fifteen hundred copies within six months. Both George Franks, the National Libraries proprietor, and Boriswood were advised that, due to the book's references to 'intimacy between members of the male sex', any defence against prosecution was futile and 'no Bench in this country would hesitate to designate the said work as "obscene"'. In fact, after the recent suppressions of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (November, 1928) and Norah James's *The Sleeveless Errand* (1929) publishers lived in fear of any reviewer with a grudge[179] and the Society of Authors' advice to Boriswood was that failure to co-operate with the authorities in every way would result not only in certain prosecution but imprisonment (Summary-Report, 1935, p. 2).

Accordingly, on March 20th, 1935, the three directors pleaded guilty and were each fined £50 and the Company £250 for 'uttering and publishing an obscene libel'. Despite the fact that he himself escaped legal indictment,[180] Hanley was furious at the publishers' 'sheer greed' in issuing his novel in such a provocative format in the first place and at their betrayal of professional integrity in their admission of guilt (Hanley, L, 1979; Hanley/Raymond, 26 3 35, Nos. 624,625). Greenwood's final act of betrayal, which

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[178] E.g. Hugh Walpole's remark that it was 'a novel that is so unpleasant and ugly, both in narration and in incident, that I wonder the printers didn't go on strike while printing it' (quoted in Gibbs, 1980, p. 25).

[179] Jack Lindsay remembers the police seizing the entire edition of the latter on the word of just such a reviewer. Published by Eric Partridge, its fate clearly explains his caution over *Drift*:

> ...there was nothing in the least obscene in the book, only the word 'buggers' used casually in conversation. Those who did not live through the period would find it hard to realize the oppressive atmosphere or to understand the power wielded by windy neurotics like James Douglas of the *Sunday Express* who denounced *Antic Hay* as 'ordure and blasphemy.' (Lindsay, 1962, p. 119)

[180] English Common Law and the Obscene Publications Act, 1857, which were invoked in prosecutions for alleged 'obscenity', invariably placed criminal responsibility on the publishers or distributors of material, not on the author. Radclyffe Hall, for instance, although she spoke vociferously in defence of her book was not herself on trial (see Brittain, 1968, pp. 100-101).

Hanley only discovered two years after the event, was that he allowed Jack Kahane's Obelisk Press to publish an unexpurgated edition of *Boy* whereby the owners - and not the novelist - would receive 10% of the royalties.[181] News of the trial came at a particularly stressful time for Hanley when he was 'worrying' over the reception of his new novel *The Furys*, a work he had believed would finally establish his literary reputation (Hanley/Raymond, 23 4 34, Nos. 31,32). The legacy of the whole Boriswood involvement - the publication of *Boy*, *Captain Bottell* and eventually *Resurrexit Dominus* - was disillusionment, not only with the expediency of alternative publishing, but with the pursuit of a particular modernist aesthetic developed in relative isolation.[182] If the Boriswood books constituted an aesthetic impasse then The Furys project, with its author's conscious declaration of having 'gone back to the workers' signalled the possibility of a resolution (Hanley/Lahr (a) 30 8 33, No. 10). Yet *The Furys* itself, while it is concerned with reforging class affiliations, also articulates in the familial rebellion of the two sons Peter and Desmond the consequences of class and communal betrayal. The increasing pre-occupation with the latter theme is clear evidence of Hanley's own consciousness of the distance he had travelled - both artistically and geographically - from his communal allegiances and of a consequent renewed sensitivity to the writer's social responsibilities. In place of that recent obsession with artistic individuation, came a new resolution which was coterminous with an increase in his political awareness and activity.

Hanley was obviously dismayed by the worsening political situation: both the prevailing depression and the emerging spectre of fascism. At the time that he was 'toying about with this idea of a saga of a working class family' he wrote to Henry Yorke that he was

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[181] Jack Kahane, a Manchester businessman turned Paris publisher, was the first to publish an extract from Joyce's 'Work in Progress' as *Haveth Childers Everywhere*, 1930 and subsequently 'rescued' other banned works, including *Death of a Hero*, *Sleeveless Errand* (1930) *The Well of Loneliness* (1933), Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* (1934) and *Boy* (see Ford, 1975, pp. 345-384, although Ford wrongly gives 1933 and not 1936 as the date of the Paris publication: see copy of the agreement, dated 16 7 35 in The Bodley Head's *Boy* file).

[182] Hanley announced to Lahr without enthusiasm that Boriswood had at last published *Resurrexit Dominus* in a very expensive limited edition of 90 copies at 5 guineas (105 shillings), a novel which at most in a trade edition would have cost 10s 6d: '... its only that bloody manuscript of 'Sheila Moynihan' (Hanley/Lahr (a), *c* July 1934, No. 16).

praying 'with great earnestness that we won't have fascism':

> The day Sir Oswald goes to the barricades then by Christ I shall be on the people's side. [...] I have not yet forgotten the action of public school men during the 1926 strike. It was disgraceful and I gather that this Mosley party is composed of the same old gang. (Hanley/Green, 22 5 33, No. 546)

Then early in 1934 Hanley, at the invitation of Montagu Slater, was involved in setting up the British Section of the Writers International, the inaugural conference of which took place in February at Conway Hall (Hanley/Lahr (a) *c* Jan 1934, No. 15; 11 2 34 No. 14).[183] Such an action was surely significant for Hanley since he would not be coaxed from his Welsh fastness on any pretext. It marked the beginnings of his involvement with Popular Front-inspired initiatives, particularly the anti-fascist journal *Left Review*, set up soon after the London conference as the official organ of the Writers' International under the editorship of Slater, Amabel Williams-Ellis and Tom Wintringham.[184] Hanley's involvement with the Left was fragmentary and inconsistent. During the twenties he had been a member of the Liverpool Independent Labour Party, in which his role had been that of 'literature secretary', presiding over a regular bookstall at meetings and even once giving a lecture (Hanley, 1937a, pp. 254-255). The renewed social commitment was consistent with his prevailing mood of disillusionment with the reading public, and an anti-bourgeois resentment. *Left Review* was an ideal medium for the projection of a repoliticized James Hanley, a genuine example of a 'proletarian' writer which the journal

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[183] Montagu Slater, (born in the mining port of Millom, Cumberland in 1902 to a lay-preaching Wesleyan tailor's family) shared with Hanley a Liverpool connection. After his graduation from Oxford on a scholarship, he was a reporter on the *Post*, and lived and worked in the 'open dormitory' of a dock settlement, after which experience he was to become a life-long member of the communist party. His first novel was *Second City* (London: Wishart, 1931) a novel about Liverpool corruption (see Lucas, 1978, pp. 182,183).

[184] Amabel Williams-Ellis (née Strachey), was the sister of John Strachey, Marxist theorist and fellow-contributor to *Left Review*. Hanley, in later life, repudiated his and Timmy's relationship with Amabel (a 'communist') but retained an admiration for her eccentric husband Clough Williams-Ellis, the architect, town-planner, rural conservationist and creator of the Italianate village, Portmeirion (Moore, 1978). Tom Wintringaham was also a poet and later fought in the Spanish Civil War.

was trying to encourage by appeals for contributions from worker-writers.[185] Hanley's first appearance was with a long pre-publication extract from *The Furys* (*LR* Vol. 1, No. 2, November 1934, pp. 3-12) and he was a reasonably regular contributor up till August 1937.

Probably his most committed involvement was as a delegate to the International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture in Paris, June 1935, to which he travelled by ferry with his friend E M Forster.[186] He did not stay with Forster, however, but with a number of Left delegates at The Palace Hotel, Boulevard St. Germain, among whom were two communist writers he admired: Ralph Fox, the eminent Marxist critic, and Mike Gold, the New York Jewish novelist and activist.[187] Although later in life Hanley was to repudiate his involvement with communists,[188] it is significant that he has fond memories of both Fox and Gold but remembers being snubbed by the patrician Aldous

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[185] One form of encouragement was the organization of literary competitions, in the first of which Amabel Williams-Ellis invited prospective authors to re-write a section from her own novel, *To Tell the Truth*. It concerned a public scene of eviction, involving a crowd, police officers and bailiffs. Competitors were asked to re-write from 'another point of view' than that of her own - the detached outsider (Williams-Ellis, 1934, pp. 39-41). Hanley was to write his own eviction scene in *The Secret Journey* (Hanley, 1938a, pp. 143-146).

[186] See Furbank, 1978, p. 193.

[187] Ralph Fox (1900-1937), a co-founder of *Left Review* and a regular contributor until his death in the Spanish Civil War, is best known for his Marxist critical work *The Novel and the People* (see Chapter 7, p. 113). Hanley was one of the signatories to his tribute in *Left Review* (Vol. 3. No. 1. pp. 2-4). Mike Gold (pseud. Irwin Granich 1893-1967) was reporter and contributing editor for the American radical journal *The Liberator* from 1922-24 and later editor of its successor *The New Masses* (1928-48). His best known work is the novel *Jews Without Money* (1935), based on his childhood in a New York tenement.

[188] Most memorably and emphatically in Hanley's not very veiled comments on thirties proletarians in 'A Writer's Day'. From his post-war Welsh isolation 'a distant lighthouse, in private sea' Hanley remembers the 'flight of proletarian duck' whose clumsiness - 'an odd lot of duck altogether [...] carrying with them a world bellyache' - was inherent in their style: 'a blind mass of feelings that seemed never under control' (Hanley, 1953, pp. 75-83). Ironically this was a criticism often levelled at his own writing (see e.g. West, 1936, pp. 586-7).

Huxley.[189] That impression of Hanley's sympathies is corroborated in a recent biography of the novelist Christina Stead, the Australian delegate who remembered the congress as 'a sociable week' during which people congregated in empathetic groups. One of the most memorable occasions was the final night when Hanley, Fox, Gold, the artist Pearl Binder and Stead's fellow Australian, Nettie Palmer, toasted the sixty-fifth birthday of the Danish writer, Martin Anderson Nexoe and sat drinking till the early hours (Rowley, 1995, pp. 170, 172, 177).[190]

Class and Rurality: Textual Implications.

Hanley continued to work for Popular Front causes over the next few years mainly in the area of cultural defence; serving on the executive committee of the British section of the International Association, set up as a result of the conference, and continuing to contribute to *Left Review*. Yet it is difficult to gauge exactly the extent of Hanley's leftist leanings at this time. One of the reasons why he was willing to be courted by the Left was the fact that they, unlike the bulk of the bourgeois press, were endorsing *The Furys* and *Left Review* was planning to serialize his troopship novel, then called 'The Secret Journey'. For Hanley, this was some compensation for the disappointing reviews of *The Furys* since, as he complained to Raymond, 'no-one else would of course serialize it' (Hanley/Raymond, 13 2 35, Nos. 608,609).[191] Yet *Left Review* was not the only journal willing to publish Hanley. Despite a resurgence of Hanley's class interests, fuelled by an anti-bourgeois grievance, he was also under an intense amount of pressure to bolster his precarious reputation and consequently to be seen to be published. At the same time that

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[189] Hanley's opinion of Huxley from reading his books was 'that he hates all humans - especially the working classes. I think a man who hates his own class in addition to a class he knows nothing about must be a queer bloody mixture' (Hanley/Raymond, 8 6 35, Nos. 649-51). Raymond defensively replied that he was 'wrong from A-Z over Aldous' (a 'kindly person' who 'distributes books at Barts to navvies and children') and assured Hanley that he would not regret approaching the eminent novelist (Raymond/Hanley, 12 6 35, No. 652).

[190] See also Aaron, 1977, p. 305, which reports Gold's celebratory account of the triumph of the Popular Front strategy.

[191] In the event only one extract was published from the novel (Hanley, 1935, pp. 297-306): the subsequent 'work in progress' piece was from the second Furys novel (Hanley, 1936, pp. 363-369)

he was appearing in the pages of *Left Review*, he was also having stories published in T S Eliot's *Criterion*, the liberal/ conservative *Spectator*, and the left/ liberal *The London Mercury* - each of which was also interested in the phenomenon of working-class writing.[192]

The group of stories published in what were the more prestigious contemporary literary journals parallel similar tendencies in the developing Furys project, namely the expression of particular working-class social concerns together with a growing antipathy to the whole industrial nightmare. The substantial excerpt from *The Furys* reproduced in *Left Review* represents some of the more politically articulate passages, giving several short slices of working-class life and ending on a decidedly euphoric note as news of the strike radiates from the epicentre of the railway yard. Yet also present are the by now common Hanleyan images of a reified working class, where human beings are numbed by the relentless urban juggernaut and transformed into grotesques. Peter Fury, watching from a distance a gang of railwaymen, observes 'something fantastic almost grotesque in their movements, as they worked in the light of the oil-flares' and is powerless to intervene when a worker, called by his fellows 'wooden-face' is all but run over by an oncoming steam engine, his responses and senses dulled by the incessant noise.[193] (Hanley, 1934c, p. 7; Hanley, 1935a, p. 212). A very similar fictional incident is the subject matter of 'A

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[192] In 1934, the more politically radical R A Scott-James had taken over the editorship of *The Mercury* from the reactionary J C Squire. In response to an article by William Nuttall called 'The Proletarian Reader' in the March 1936 edition, Scott-James co-ordinated a symposium, 'The Coming of the Proletarian Literature' in which Leslie Halward proclaimed himself the ideal writer of whom Nuttall appeared to be in search, berating his fellow writers Walter Brierley and F C Boden for being too educated or poetic, and Hanley for being 'too bitter for words' (Halward, 1936, p. 12). There followed in the next few months some lively correspondence duly noted by Edgell Rickword who regretted that *Left Review* had not initiated such a discussion, which, had it done so, 'would have been on a much higher level both as to facts and theory' (Rickword, 1936, p. 417).

[193] *LR*, Vol. 1, No. 2, November 1934, pp. 7-11. See also on the subject of the 'terrible and tireless energy' of the mechanized world, the story, 'Machines Stop': when the dynamos at his factory suddenly cease, a worker is beset by violent headaches, which are relieved only by the resumption of the noise (Hanley, 1938b, pp. 249-253 from *The Spectator*, Vol. 155, 20 9 35, pp. 423-4).

Changed Man', Hanley's first contribution to *The Criterion* in which 'a big strapping [...] tearin' feller, full of life and always one for a joke' is transformed by an horrific fatal accident he witnesses on the railway line: 'like all the man in him broke up there and then' (Hanley, 1938b, pp. 87, 92).[194] The difference between the story and *The Furys* extract, however is that, while the latter manages to contain a potentially ruinous occurrence within a broader discourse of social transformation, the former focuses on the consequences of an imagined alternative which is decidedly tragic.

Although, collectively, these works reveal a high level of social and political insight into the struggles of the urban poor, there is consistently a degree of ambivalence in the representation of external events. The unnamed city environments closely resemble the dark and secret journeys through Gelton - 'down alleys, round corners, through holes, through sweated air' (Ibid, p. 63). Increasingly for Hanley, the great evil is the whole immense and intractable structure of the city, which in the second *Criterion* story, 'Aunt Anne' assumes an Eliotian persona of its own, emitting a final valediction to its moribund victims, "'what voice would dare ever to drown out my own?'" (Ibid. p. 66). If the destructive power of modernity has a voice, then its multiple forms congeal at times into a representative face, expressive of a unitary malevolence. Such an image is what confronts Hanley's individual victims at moments of extreme public panic, notably in another 1935 story, published in a limited edition, 'At Bay'.[195] This has a close affinity with the public 'hue and cry' at the end of *The Secret Journey* in that both stories are concerned with communal outrage against a putative murderer. The protagonist in 'At Bay' has perpetrated no crime, but is condemned and publicly ostracized by association. However it is not so much the official apparatus which creates his state of acute paranoia as the haunting spectre of social indignation. Everywhere the young bank clerk is pursued by rows of faces which fantastically cohere into some monstrous death-like mask: 'one face. A new sort of monster' a face that was 'all teeth' (Hanley, 1944b, p. 106); and in

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[194] First appearance in *The Criterion*, Vol 14, April 1935, pp. 373-378).

[195] The Grayson Books, London: Grayson & Grayson, 1935. Two hundred and eighty-five copies only were printed (Gibbs, 1980, pp. 47-49). It was reprinted in Hanley, 1944b, pp. 101-130.

the novel, its narrative indictment of the ruinous moneylending system, culminates in a reified image in which the bricks of the houses become for the fugitive Peter Fury 'great mirrors through which he could glimpse the sea of faces, thrust forward, upturned, meshed together as one face' (Hanley, 1938a, p. 568).

It is in such scenes in *The Furys* chronicle, (cf also the earlier strike scenes) where the whole social fabric, as it were, irrupts into an ungovernable mob in an Audenic vision of the 'dissolution of communities', that Hanley's critical realist project is threatened by a modernist vision of an implacable, immutable and ultimately uncontrollable contemporary social system. At the same time, particularly in the more concentrated and introverted form of the short story, that panoramic view afforded by the novel is juxtaposed with more private conflicts and confrontations, in which both social and familial divisions seem insurmountable. For instance, Hanley's stories 'From Five to Six' and 'People are Curious'[196] could be accused, as was the work of his contemporary Walter Brierley, of not sufficiently bringing out 'the fighting spirit of the unemployed' which would have been 'a much greater use to the working class' (Woolley, cited in Croft, 1990, p. 62).[197] However, Hanley's modernism which opts for feeling over prescription, hyperbole rather than realist accuracy, is not the less effective for being differently inflected. In the latter story, the situation of the destitute couple walking from an older order of industrialism to the more prosperous realm of the newer manufacturing industries only to confront the unexpected indifference of their own class is precisely descriptive of the two Englands so well documented in Orwell's *Coming Up for Air*. However, in the former story, the shattering reality of unemployment is given a different perspective. As with the Fury family, the reader is presented here with a house divided, the varying grievances of poverty and overcrowding loudly clamouring for priority. Yet over and above the claims of a mother's drudgery, a daughter's onerous factory life, one son's dole conditions and

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[196] Published in *The Criterion*, Vol. 17 April 1938, pp. 432-442. and *The London Mercury*, Vol. 38, October 1938, pp. 529-536 respectively.

[197] Brierley's two novels of the 1930s were *Means Test Man* (1935) and *Sandwichman* (1937). Walter Greenwood was similarly accused of not being sufficiently propagandist in *Love on the Dole*, London: Cape, 1933. For a discussion of contemporary calls for commitment in art, see also Croft, 1990, Chapter 2 passim and Chapter 3, pp. 111-114.

another's struggle for 'self-improvement',[198] it is the ageing father's sudden redundancy (and here Hanley's own father comes to mind) and his stricken state of silence which speaks most eloquently.

That these stories were published in both left and politically more conservative journals is a clear indication of an ambivalence inherent in the author's multi-accented discourse. Another closely related story to the above, published in *Left Review* was 'The Dead',[199] in which the plight of an unemployed younger man is juxtaposed to that of the older father-in-law, who as a result of the Means Test is propelled out into 'the unknown amongst strangers' and 'the morbid terror of unkindness' (Hanley, 1938b, p. 183).[200] Whereas the realist component of such writing has clear political implications, it is significant that the older characters in both stories remain silent and that the discourse of the young is to some extent subordinated, as it were, by a wordless, though superior eloquence. That textual strategy has already been suggested in Hanley's declared preference for 'the people of yesterday' (see above, p. 220) and it is further revealed in *Broken Water* when he proposes his own idealized form of working-class expression. Hanley is spellbound by a destitute figure huddled in a shop doorway. When given a match and cigarette, the man remains silent:

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[198] Jerry's plea for 'space' to study - 'we're too close together, we're crucifying each other with our presence' - brings to mind Brierley's Arthur, the eponymous 'sandwichman':

> He had intended having a full evening at logic, but [...] could not get a nervous anger out of himself; fierce thoughts would rise in his brain and run out to fasten themselves on [his stepfather] talking loudly in the other room. (Hanley, 1938, p. 79; Brierley, 1990, p. 39)

[199] *Left Review*, Vol. 3 No. 7, Aug 1937, pp. 384-387.

[200] See Wal Hannington's report on the Thirties, *Ten Lean Years*, which among the many consequences of unemployment observed 'evidence [...] from all parts of the country which showed how family life was being broken up by application of the Means Test' (Hannington, 1940, p. 45). See also Hanley's *Grey Children*, which was written as a result of his own journey to the 'Distressed Areas':

> 'My father had to leave us because when my husband was drawing dole they deducted the amount of the old man's pension, so he went into the workhouse. He's seventy.' (Hanley, 1937b, p. 6)

> I should have hated him there and then if he had uttered a single word. For that would have spoilt everything. Silence kept the door open, a word would slam it to. [...] When I first met his eye he lowered his head. That [...] had meaning, and so I stood there, saying not a word, the while he puffed away at the cigarette. Silence was best after all. (Hanley, 1937a, p. 292)

If *Left Review*'s publication of 'The Dead' gave utterance to the hitherto inaudible then the silence of the old man is eminently expressive. However, if, for Hanley, silence best articulates the condition of the working class, then it allows for too many interested claims to be made on their behalf by the more educated and articulate, and for a suppression of those other voices whose very volume is for them a necessity. It is in this sense that in 'Between Five and Six', the family's dismissal of its son as an ineffectual 'flag-waver' occludes the significance of his activism and offers to the *Criterion*'s bourgeois subscribers a privileged reading of the working class as quietist or stoical in its silent suffering (Hanley, 1938b, pp. 72-75).

Our Time is Gone?

It is from this chronological point in Hanley's career that his propensity for the 'people of yesterday' starts to become more emphatic through an increased privileging of the less audible and older members of the working class and an attendant longing for the ancestral world they represent. As the writing develops through the later part of the 1930s, these new ideological strands are evident both in short stories and non-fictional forms and are finally brought together in his formidable third Furys novel, *Our Time is Gone* (1940). Written during the previous year, it discloses a surprisingly non-belligerent tone for a Second World War novel. However, since it is set during the First World War, the necessary propagandist elements emerge in the analagous struggle of Denny and Fanny Fury to overcome the exigencies of wartime conditions (See Chapter 6 p. 79). Denny returns to sea and Fanny takes her place with the 'army' of women emblematically disposing of human detritus from 'the great state-chamber of filth', toiling in the shadowy nether world of troopships, 'scrubbing deep down, scrubbing at the low levels of life, the very bottom [...] cleaning at the dregs of living' (Hanley, 1949, pp. 346, 344). Yet curiously, even more symbolic - and for a wartime novel unprecedented - is the central heroism of Joseph Killkey, not in any form of active service but as a conscientious

objector.

The anti-war sentiments of *Our Time is Gone* are a timely reminder in an atmosphere of impending conflict, of the imperialism which underlies the renewed militarization. Desmond Fury, the trade union activist has been made Captain Fury, now in the service of organizing those he formerly represented, 'not for the millennium, whose horizons had now become far horizons - but for the prosecution of a war' (Ibid, p. 136). Yet Desmond at least is engaged in a dialogue with other workers, for whom it is necessary actively to resist his insidious campaign. Joseph Killkey, on the other hand, while he is similarly resistant, effects that symbolic quietism, able to shut the door on the corruptions of modernity and be 'left entirely secure in his own small world' (Ibid, p. 216). It is the novel's central dialectic: for Desmond, Joe's lack of any 'grudge against the world [...] was the very thing that was wrong with him [...] "... a worker should start to kick against things the very day he is born"' (Ibid p. 215). However, Joseph's stand against the military authorities is no mere contemporary pledge for peace, but the re-enactment of a rite, in which his endurance of public humiliations becomes the modern equivalent of Christ's passion: being spat upon and paraded through the streets; wearing the 'crown' of a newspaper hat; bearing his 'cross' of a weighted soldier's pack and even receiving the restorative drink from a compassionate soldier (see pp. 404-422). Here, as in Hanley's later war-time novel, *The Ocean*, the dominant image emerges from a Catholic past which had once been so vehemently repudiated. Yet the nature of the abuse Joe receives is not only 'jingoistic' but sectarian. Among the usual shouts of 'coward' or 'conchie' are those from the 'Death and Glory Boys', the teamsters and the Belfast men who accuse Joe of preferring 'to fight for the Pope' and boast of hanging 'bastards like you on their scap-u-*lars*' (Ibid, pp. 405-7). Here, surely, is Hanley employing the shared images of an embattled community to speak out against its imperialist oppressors.

Nevertheless, what is often so readily enabled by that struggle of an isolated and persecuted figure is a modernist reading which privileges an ostensibly dominant individualism. That would indeed be the case if it were not for Hanley's differently inflected modernism, a multi-accentual method which offers not a single, but a series of 'rotating character centres'. If Joseph is a lone and passive voice, then his decisive action

is a link with the equally mute eloquence of his near contemporaries: Fanny and Denny Fury. Such a connection demands that the novel be read not in that conventionally subjectivist sense, but collectively in a version of what Raymond Williams called, after Brecht, 'complex seeing'. A reading across those centres offers what is so lacking in the abundance of war novels which emerged in the 1930s, namely the devastating effect of the First World War upon the entire social range. While Joseph languishes in prison and Denny confronts the lurking menace of submarines, the 'monstrous regiment' in which Fanny and her neighbour Mrs Gumbs enlist is the ghostly 'underworld' counterpart to those fighting on the earthly fields of Flanders, silent witnesses to the horrors a bellicose nation refuses to acknowledge. Yet more significantly it is they - who 'breathed putrefaction', 'scraped the blood and slime and waste' so that the 'dead water of the dock took the burden of the cleaning, of the scavenging filth of war' - who gain for themselves the dubious knowledge of the trenches from the lingering remnants of the wounded and dying (Ibid pp. 509-510). Thus, the subjective and discrete experiences of stevedore, ship's cleaner and merchant seaman are socially joined in the floating microcosm of the ship, the dominant metaphor for the war as a **common** experience.

However, despite that affirmation of commonality, there is a sense in which *Our Time is Gone* represents the culmination of an underlying ideological current in Hanley's recent writing which was withdrawing from the political struggle of the 1930s to the compensations of rurality. Included in the 1938 collection *People are Curious* is a selection from a series of stories with rural settings - first published in *The Spectator*, *The New Statesman* and *Time and Tide*. Two of them, 'The Butterfly' and 'The Lamb', commonly express a moral outrage against a supposedly civilized society which no longer recognizes its dependency on the natural world. The former repudiates the stringency of a seminary education and implicitly proposes a more humane and simple kind founded on 'the strange life that abounded in the hedges and ditches' (Hanley, 1938b, p. 146), while the latter ponders the intrusion of the motor-car's destructive power into the countryside, 'its garish colours [...] flinging a defiant ultimatum at Nature's quieter tones' (Ibid, p. 219).

It is noticeable that, for the first time, Hanley's stories have transposed the basis of their

anti-industrial discourse from the sea to the domain of a recently rediscovered countryside. However, the place itself is significantly absent. Rather than the Wales of Hanley's new home these stories are primarily concerned with the Ireland of his past. However, as the anti-clerical tone of 'The Butterfly' suggests, the discourse of Ireland as a lost Eden is not altogether assured. That would seem to be confirmed in the two longer stories 'Beyond the Horizon' and 'Afternoon at Miss Fetch's', both of which confront the problematics of the exile's return. The latter returns to a world only briefly alluded to in the first two *Furys* novels, intertextually investigating Sheila Fury's mysterious origins. Here, the once proud and opulent 'Big House' of the Downeys is virtually derelict, its last landed survivor (Sheila's mother) in thrall to her formidable retainer, the eponymous Miss Fetch. The final touches to a composite portrait of a house hanging on to its past are provided by a letter from its former master, the estranged Mr Downey who, refusing his wife's entreaties to return, adumbrates the later novel's epigrammatic theme in the words '"That time has gone and I don't think it will come again"' (Ibid, p. 302). If that is indeed a valediction on an irrevocable past, then it is further confirmed in *Our Time is Gone*, both in the old couple's reiterated refrain and in a fuller exploration of the old estate in Chapter 11, in which Desmond Fury discovers 'Rams Gate' for himself.

What is suggested in Desmond's 'return' and Miss Fetch's dominance is that the older order is relinquishing its control of the land to its former incumbents and latter-day inheritors: the peasantry and the working class. However, as his wanderings through the overgrown expanse of the estate demonstrate, Desmond's modern consciousness cannot answer the call of the 'lost domain' and he searches in vain for any visible signs of human intervention:

> Not a cow or a horse, not a sheep or a pig, not even a chicken. And not a human sound. Somewhere there were ordinary people. Somewhere there were trains, and trams and boats. And that was in the world. But this *wasn't* the world! It was simply hell. (Hanley, 1949, p. 476)

If the cherished world of rural Ireland is lost to an irrevocably urbanized humanity, then it is to be recovered by a different kind of sensibility. The other longer story, 'Beyond the Horizon', tells of an artist's search for his lost childhood and fictionalizes that

preoccupation with lineage frequently disclosed in Hanley's own memories. As in the companion piece and its novelistic version, the old home is desolate and derelict: yet unlike in the Miss Fetch narratives, a significant connection is made between the lone itinerant and a representative of the settled community, establishing through language an identity between the indigenous speech of the 'jarvey' - whose family, like Hanley's 'had a lot of fine men in the Navy' - with the poetic turns of phrase of the exiled artist, 'the last to follow the fellow from the SEA' (Ibid, pp. 188, 197).[201] In this way the more conventional discourse of lamentation gives way to the more constructive one of reconciliation.

It is at this moment that Hanley's biography again insists on its relevance. What these narratives are struggling to express are the problematics of Hanley's exile: the desperate longing for cultural and geographic settlement, yet also the fear of that perennial sense of loss which working-class characters such as Desmond represent. Desmond, like Hanley, has placed himself beyond the pale by marrying into a different class and forsaking his religion. Yet Desmond's dilemma is that once he has entered that realm of a different order of sensibility, he is equally out of place, constantly aware of his boorishness, clumsy movements, his inferior intelligence. The character has very close parallels with aspects of Hanley's own personality. According to Liam Hanley, it was his mother whom he considered to possess the superior intellect and, despite both James and Timmy being pianists, it was generally thought that she was the greater talent (of almost concert standard according to one source - Lloyd, 1992). Hanley expresses in *Broken Water* an exasperation with his autodidactic learning of the piano, his coarsened and ill-used sailor's hands not being equal to the task, (pp. 248-254) and as Liam Hanley remembers, he always envied his brother Frank's ability to dance (Hanley, L, 1996). Despite, then, Hanley's introduction to different habits and customs of class and an implicit upward mobility, there was always a sense in which he, like Desmond, remained unreconciled to its putatively finer ways of living.

However, as 'Beyond the Horizon' demonstrates, what eminently redeems the

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[201] Cf. also O'Neill's play of the same name (O'Neill, 1988, p. 181).

incongruities of class is the transcending potential of art which can penetrate through to some deeper commonality. The underlying movement in these narratives, as the 1930s comes to a close, is increasingly towards some form of reconciliation yet, despite Hanley's constant expressions of empathy, this cannot be achieved through the Liverpool working class nor, as the descriptions of Rams Gate and later writings on similar subjects testify,[202] through the class that he married into. What affords that resolution is, rather, a symbolic identification with rurality itself, in which the Wales of his residency and the familial past of Ireland commingle, the traditional values of his parents' generation metaphorically expressing the quality of the present lived experience. Therefore, if one half of Hanley's persona is the irreconcilable outsider, then the alter-ego figure of Peter still holds out the possibility of re-unification. Although from his prison cell it is difficult for Peter to contemplate the lost world of his parents' generation - the coast of Ireland is obscured by 'the coast of struggle, of humiliations, of deceit' - his artist's sensibility clings for spiritual support to the cherished memories and hopes of his mother (Hanley, 1949, pp. 449-45). The authorial sense of longing is finally expressed in Fanny's dreams of an arcadian Ireland restored. As she scrubs the ship, the wooden deck turns into 'a green carpet, and Denny and she were walking across it, arm in arm...':

> *In the distance there was a house with a blue door and the brass hatch shone in the sunlight. Denny and she came to this door, and her grandfather opened it for them. [...] 'What a cool place,' Denny said. She looked out through the door, watching two children carrying wooden buckets to the spring near by. A cow passed, a man behind it. A bell rang in the distance, and then an open carriage passed the door, and a very old man wearing a panama hat raised it as she called out: 'Good afternoon, Mr Lynch. A glorious day.'*
> (Hanley, 1949, p. 513)

'Red Dragons' or 'Grey Children': Representations of Race

While the above is a symbolic expression of Hanley's spiritual homecoming, his first public declaration of a specifically Welsh identity was occasioned by an opportunity to

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[202] See for instance other fictions with country house settings: 'Between Six & Seven', in *Crilley and Other Stories* (1945), 'It Has Never Ended' in *Selected Stories* (1947) and *The House in the Valley* (1951)

explore that other Wales beyond the area of the northern uplands, in the industrial valleys of the south. Something of the implications of that discovery is more readily afforded by a comparison of Hanley's work with that of a writer he admired from the Lahr circle, Rhys Davies. Like Hanley, Davies was throughout the 1930s engaged on his own extended exploration of his class allegiances in the almost exactly coterminous South Wales trilogy.[203] That too is concerned with the communal and industrial struggles of the working class, in Davies's case the mining community of Clydach, where he had grown up the son of a grocer. Unlike Hanley, however, Davies's narrative position is much more expressly sympathetic to a working-class socialism, yet there is here too a political ambivalence due to his less assured class identification. His principal characters are those more educated members of the fellow-travelling bourgeois or petit-bourgeoisie, who, while they are often enthusiastically involved in the miners' socialist struggle, are finally unable to sustain a faith in the endurance of specifically working-class values. What takes precedence, rather, as with Hanley, is that expression of industrial malevolence: both in terms of the landscape where the river is 'slimy with dust, washing like some desolate stream of the underworld' (Davies, 1937, p. 9) and of the people themselves, especially the dwellers of 'The Terraces', whose riotous barbarism has corrupted the once beautiful land:

> The windows of the grimy rows of houses shone like markings on the backs of saurian monsters lying in primeval slime. He saw the place as bestial and corrupt, allowed to flourish in unobstructed depravity, meaninglessly foul in the mud, a repulsive life breeding horrors unhindered, encouraged. The whole place was a slimy corruption of underworld life. Beauty became grotesque here, peace a fantasy, tenderness a mockery. (Ibid, p. 376)

If that strikes a familiarly pessimistic chord, Davies nevertheless maintains a faith in the potential of ordinary working-people by adopting a textual strategy which projects a representative character or attribute as an image of the human ideal. His is only a slightly different inflection of the same impulse in Hanley. While the latter emancipates his class at the level of the mythic or the tragic, Davies's strategy is to invoke Lawrence's 'noble savage' paradigm, in which the indomitable spirit of Welsh rebellion is fuelled by the

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[203] *Honey and Bread* 1935; *A Time to Laugh*, 1937; and *Jubilee Blues*, 1938.

brutal vitality of the working class. Tudor Morris, the middle-class doctor joins the miners' fight because they are 'alive... And not stuffed up with a lot of dead mess' (Davies, 1937, p. 21) while Cassie Jones, the new landlady of *The Jubilee*, rejoices in the 'doubly alive' quality of her clientele (Davies, 1938, p. 48).

Yet, as the example of Hanley has already demonstrated, an increasing tension develops in the more sustained narrative form, in which the frustrations, impasses and conflicts of the industrial environment are finally so inimical to both personal and communal struggles that alternative solutions are sought beyond its physical borders. While Davies's sequence often signals a note of communal hope with its Lawrentian vision of a 'a new earth and a new heaven' (Davies, 1937, p. 432) the final work of the trilogy finds itself increasingly unable to resolve its own contradictory stance on the possibilities of social change through the struggles of the working class. If *A Time to Laugh* was a celebration of the new century's hope in a newly constituted industrial community, then *Jubilee Blues*, in its chronicle of the strikes of the 1920s, is a record of its failure. That Utopian faith in community, however, finds new expression in Davies's consistently privileged source of value, namely that of a pre-lapsarian past, before, as he so meticulously chronicles in *Honey & Bread*, the industrialization of the South Wales valleys. The consistent thread running through the whole project is initially through the Morris family and subsequently through the landlady, Cassie Jones, the preservation of a connection with a Welsh rural past in those twin poles of the communal ideal: the aristocracy in its role as pastoral custodian and the idealized peasantry. As the revolutionary zeal of the younger generation of Morrises dissipates in the frustrations and failures of collective action, Cassie Jones, the one time simple farm worker, assumes her central role as the moral heart of the whole trilogy.

Cassie's memory of her rural past is re-kindled when her friends, the Jameses, a thrifty and industrious mining family, are selected for a government scheme to re-settle unemployed industrial workers on the land. This 'back-to-the-land' idea had a factual basis in the Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Act, 1931 and has a long history in both right and left political strategies - it was a favourite idea of the Chartist Leader, Feargus O'Connor - but Land Settlement as it came to be known, which was designed to ease the

'problem of the distressed areas', left many 'pioneers' bankrupt and destitute, abandoning the inexperienced families to the rigours of the already overproducing world and home agricultural markets.[204] Whatever the reality, the back-to-the-land idea still had sufficient cultural weight in 1938 for Davies to imply that it could still be a viable alternative to the demoralizations of industrialism. The trilogy ends on a note of optimism: while the Jameses are reluctantly, yet hopefully transposed to somewhere in the middle of England, Cassie deserts her dissolute husband and the failing *Jubilee* to return with her child to the cherished rurality of her Brynsiriol Farm.

What Davies expresses here - and what he shares with Hanley - is a widespread longing for return and settlement in the uncertainties and crises of the inter-war economy. As well as receiving statutory endorsement in the Agricultural Land Act, 'back-to-the-land' was often invoked as the basis of cultural and spiritual renewal in a country which, already demoralized by the horrors of the First World War, was in the grip of industrial and moral decline. Indeed, Wales had its own local back-to-the-land movement which originated among a group of nationalist academics at Aberystwyth during the inter-War period. In 1925 Plaid Cymru had been founded on the powerful intellectual idea that Welsh nationhood was rooted, historically, culturally and geographically in a rural and traditional identity,[205] despite the fact that the demographic majority was located in the industrialized Wales of the south, which had developed 'a not wholly dissimilar culture of its own' (Williams, G, 1985, pp. 223-224). Ignoring that reality, the intellectual and educational movement of nationalism saw only the devastating effects of industrialism, and such erstwhile politically opposed figures as the conservative George Stapledon and the socialist H J Fleure were united in an idealism which called for the 'rebuilding of modern society on a rural foundation' (Gruffudd, 1994, p. 68).

The years between 1931 and 1936, then, were for Wales a culturally and politically transitional period when the industrialized south was experiencing its worst period of

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[204] See Hannington, 1937, pp. 168-193.

[205] Saunders Lewis (1893-1985) was one of the more notoriously right-wing co-founders of the movement.

'distress' and the minority culture of rural Wales was on the brink of a possible re-generation. For Davies and Hanley it was a particularly testing time for their respective communal and political allegiances.[206] While Davies was struggling between the dual imperatives of an indigenous 'Valleys' and a metropolitan exile's identity (see Davies, 1969, Chapters 7 & 8), Hanley had finally settled in the relative peace of upland Merionethshire. Yet, as already demonstrated, it had also been for Hanley a time of personal, artistic and political crises which were no less urgent in the early months of 1937. Only a few months after Hanley's elation at the reviews of *The Secret Journey*, Chatto & Windus reluctantly rejected his third contracted novel for them, 'Soldier's Wind'. For the third time Hanley was threatening to give up writing altogether and return to the sea, yet he was still under contractual obligations to produce a third book, which he now admitted could not be a work of fiction since his weekly advances far exceeded the income from sales and he was heavily in debt (Hanley/Raymond, 29 1 37, No. 855). He had already begun work on the memorial fragment, *Broken Water* when Hanley's father died and the work became a valedictory tribute to Edward Hanley's life and work.[207]

Coincidentally, Hanley had already been approached by *The Spectator* to produce a different kind of writing, then currently in vogue and therefore potentially much more

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[206] In the ambivalences of his 'mining' trilogy Davies has to a certain extent ignored the exhortations of his own idol. D H Lawrence had reportedly implored Davies at Bandol, 'Don't desert your class! Don't run away from your class!' (Lindsay, 1962, p. 149). However Davies later seems to have confirmed Lawrence's fears. Taking issue with an article by the miner-novelist Harold Heslop, Davies declared that his concern was 'individual freedom and the development of the self', deploring Heslop's entanglement in 'mass feelings and conflicts' which was 'simply not the proper sphere' of the imaginative artist (Davies/Lahr (b), No. 3, 1930).

[207] Something of the depths of Hanley's depression can be gauged from his words to Henry Raymond:

> I loved him deeply and there it is [...] So you see what the sea can do [...] It swallowed up his life and mine and we never really knew each other. The only consolation I got was the name of the place he's buried in, Hither Green. But how I wished it had been Merrion Square, Dublin.
> (Hanley/Raymond, 25 2 37, Nos. 863, 864)

saleable. At the same time, it was an opportunity for Hanley to re-engage with his class, not this time as a novelist, but as an investigative journalist, recording the popular voice of the 'distressed areas' of the Welsh mining communities, much in the spirit of Orwell's 'Wigan Pier' venture for The Left Book Club.[208] The result of that journey was *Grey Children, a Study in Humbug and Misery* (1937), Hanley's first book about the people of his newly-adopted country. In that work, just as in Davies's trilogy, the division of cultures which is the consequence of a particular perception of a Welsh national identity comes sharply into focus. Hanley, as a member of the working class, initially expresses solidarity with the miners and their families. In the introduction, he refuses the belief that 'a vast re-armament programme' is making a general improvement:

> In fact, I should say things are worse not better. A special area is a new kind of social hell, with nothing special about it except the demoralization of a whole people, physical and moral [...]
> It is not only the lack of bread and scandalous housing conditions, it is the terrible feeling of not being wanted, of being useless and carrying on one's back the social stigma that now attaches to all idle men. (Hanley, 1937b, pp. vii,viii)

It is characteristic of Hanley, brought up in a Liverpool founded on the very principles of 'surplus labour', to empathize with the human and emotional damage of unemployment. The Left was already commending the early results of his researches by May 1937 (see Hannington, 1940, pp. 178,179) and on publication in September it was particularly praised for its 'simply acting as a mouthpiece to the people of South Wales' (Hodgkin, 1937, p. 692). Yet while the methodology of the work is to give voice to a range of opinion, and 'let the people speak for themselves', Hanley's clear preferences are for the miner who embodies his own idealized view of the simple working man, rather than for the more vociferous and passionate of the political activists. Hanley's political prejudices are revealed in his commentaries: the 'rampant agitator [...] was very

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[208] The spate of regional 'travels to the interior' books was begun by J B Priestley with his *English Journey* of 1934 which, while it does make a valid critique of the two Englands of complacent prosperity and regional poverty, resorts to a kind of low sneering at 'foreigners' - including the Liverpool Irish - and a smug celebration of 'little England' (see pp. 416-7 and for some blatantly racist allegations concerning Liverpool, pp. 248-249).

dogmatic, very arrogant, and talked like a textbook' but more especially it was his lack of humour and the Communist's 'hatred of psychology' that was to be deplored (Hanley, 1937b, p. 163). On the other hand, the preferred embodiment of the South Wales spirit were the miners of simpler virtue, like his guide, and the person to whom Hanley devotes most time and words, John Jones:

> He seemed to me to be a fair example of the Welsh miner. He was intelligent... and very much alive to what was going on in the world around him. He read much, thought much, and also, as one could see from that sensitive face, he felt about many things too. (Ibid, p. 22)

Jones is Hanley's key informant: ILP member, staunch defender of the Tonypandy Martyrs and faithful supporter of the Miners' Federation. However, Hanley is much less interested in his politics than in Jones's cultural and emotional life and the degree to which he and his fellow workers have achieved that emancipation which is able to transcend the effects of political conflict. What most impresses Hanley, beyond the detail of the social hell he faithfully describes, are the splendours of the Miners' Institute Library and Theatre, the devotion to things of the mind, the interest and enthusiasm for literature and culture, and the stoical capacity for endurance which symbolizes 'the spirit of the miners of South Wales' (Ibid, p. 230).

Whereas those virtues can be considered a source of strength, an over-emphasis on their significance allows Hanley to claim too passive a role for his 'ideal' working class. Hanley's analysis of the problems of South Wales concludes that the simple worker is at the mercy of a complex political situation over which he/she has no control and whose only option is to choose 'between the convictions of two warring ideologies [...] a totalitarian state of either colour, Black or Red':

> Jones must make up his mind very soon as to which camp he intends to go, and in doing so destroy the coinage of his own worth as an individualist and as a man. **His race, his history count nothing**. (Ibid, p. 79, emphasis added)

That last sentence is indicative of Hanley's new ideological position, since it implies that whatever is happening in the industrial region of the South, it is somehow alien to a

specifically Welsh history and culture. Hanley, coming to South Wales, is no longer the fellow-worker from a similarly dangerous and economically precarious industry, but a writer-in-residence, as it were, in the traditional place of Wales's spiritual and national heartland. As Hanley's writing progresses over the next fifteen years, during the period of the War and its aftermath, the proximity of the physical and inspirational presence of the Welsh upland landscape exerts an ever more powerful influence. By that is meant, not only that Hanley starts to write about his relatively new environment, but also that, increasingly, he sees the world in terms of two irreconcilable absolutes: the temporally distant industrial world of dissolution and alienation (Liverpool, the Merchant Navy, South Wales) and the world he inhabits, an incorruptibly natural realm, where still resides the possibility of human redemption and 'true community'.

CHAPTER 13. THE SECOND WORLD WAR: CRISIS AND RESOLUTION

Hanley and the BBC.

This chapter examines the social and political implications for Hanley of the Second World War and its aftermath. As the 1930s drew to a close, Hanley's social rôle as a writer had been increasingly in crisis due to the perceived necessities of both political engagement and artistic detachment. In the event, what was achieved was a kind of equilibrium - occasioned by his commission to write about the miners of South Wales - in which he returned to the priorities of his own class, and a former commitment to the struggles of merchant seamen. It was significant, then, that his new projects for The Bodley Head, which had renewed his contract in the later months of 1937, re-established him as a writer of the sea, while at the same time maintaining his reputation as the creator of *The Furys*.[209] With the outbreak of war, Hanley's continuing rôle of working-class representative assumed an added utilitarian function: he was able to speak both socially as champion of working-class recognition in the war effort and politically as part of the anti-Nazi propaganda machine. However, the writing itself, while it assumed a greater public profile, also disclosed the underlying divisions and tensions in what was ostensibly a unified nation under siege. This was even more the case in the writing of the immediate aftermath in which Hanley's expressions of social crisis were part of the general post-war struggle to forge new forms of both personal and national identity.

While still in the throes of finally producing his troopship novel first begun in 1931, Hanley was inevitably faced with the reality that both the life-style and the isolation of Glan Ceirw were unsustainable. In early 1939 they put the house up for sale, leaving as caretaker Hanley's friend and amanuensis Paul Sheridan,[210] and moved to London -

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[209] Namely the most complete collection of sea stories to date, *Half an Eye*, November, 1937 and the novel, *Hollow Sea* June, 1938 (see Chapter 6, pp. 71-73).

[210] Paul Sheridan was the pseudonym of Douglas Maurice Wolfe. According to Tecwyn Lloyd, Paul, as he was known locally, was a figure 'unusual for this part of the world'. Dressed in a Bohemian fashion with a shock of red hair, he was a 'romantic' and 'a man of good education', one of those whom Hanley was in the habit of inviting to stay, encouraging them to adopt rigorous regimes like his own. In return for Hanley's schooling, they would perform manual tasks around the house and grounds or, like Paul,

staying at a number of temporary addresses - while Hanley actively pursued alternative forms of income. Yet this new departure was not out of some sense of resignation - when formerly, during bouts of depression, Hanley had determined to give up writing altogether - but was the result of his recent experiments with dramatic form, particularly with a view to radio adaptation. As early as July 1938 Hanley had submitted to the BBC a play 'We Are The Living', under the pseudonym of Seamus O'Hanlon, and received an immediately favourable reaction from Barbara Burnham, an assistant in the drama department. Despite her recognition of its 'indictment' and the strength of its 'culminating effect', her qualification that 'we couldn't do it as it stands', that it was 'too turgid', was characteristic of reactions from the BBC (BBC Memo, Feb 1938, No.3). Her eventual reply - after several months - was that it was 'too long' and wondered whether he didn't have any 'shorter or lighter material'. What followed was a series of submissions of short stories (for adaptation as drama or 'talks') received enthusiastically by various staff members - including D M Graham and Lawrence Gilliam of the BBC's Features Departments. Hanley was generally recognised as 'a writer of some distinction and standing', who needed encouragement, but whose raw qualities of writing required extensive emendation (BBC Memo, May 1941, No. 47).

In the meantime, between July 1939 and November 1940, the Hanleys were leading an unsettled, almost nomadic existence, sometimes renting, alternatively relying on the kindness of friends.[211] For the first few months they stayed at the house of the V S

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act as secretary. Another of these was Rayner Heppenstall who 'suffered such agonies' under Hanley's tutelage:

> Every morning at Seven Bells I roused him nautically - had him for four months. He's got it alright, but he lacks guts, courage and is hellish lazy. He said Murray Middleton [sic] and I were the only energetic persons he'd ever met.
> (Hanley/Raymond, 26 10 36, Nos. 556, 557)

According to Liam Hanley, his father intimated that Heppenstall overstayed his welcome. Heppenstall does not mention Hanley in his autobiography, only that he met J C Powys at Corwen (Heppenstall, 1969; Hanley, L, 1996).

[211] For the following details I am grateful to Liam Hanley's quite remarkable memories of the War (when he was only seven or eight years old) which were able to put flesh on the mysterious bones of wartime addresses.

Pritchetts in Maida Vale,[212] then at the Suffolk coastal town of Walberswick to be close to Timmy Hanley's father, who was dying of cancer. Early in 1940 they were again back in London to stay at Walter Peacock and Barbara Burnham's Hampstead flat;[213] then to a small cottage in Ross-on-Wye, before finally taking a furnished flat in Chelsea in August during which time James and Timmy experienced the Blitz at first hand. For most of this period, their young son Liam was with them, although by the summer he was at his maternal grandfather's 'lodge' near Betws-y-Coed with a kindly pair of retainers called the Owens. This was not far from the new home of his paternal grandmother and aunt, who had finally escaped the London devastation and 'chaos' to a small terraced house at Cerrig-y-Drudion, very close to the Hanleys' previous home at Tynant. Liam Hanley remembers the time as being one of constant excitement, looking forward to each successive move with eager anticipation, but later gained the impression that it was a very unhappy period for his parents.

A period of consolidation and calm came with the Hanleys' removal to North Wales in January 1941, this time to the village of Llanfechain near Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire, which was to be their home for the next twenty years. Here Hanley completed his new experimental novel, *The Ocean*, which reinvoked his own experience at sea during the First World War (see Chapter 6, pp. 82-84). The generally favourable reviews after its publication in April clearly revived his reputation as an imaginative writer of the sea, since it was just a month later that he finally had accepted a short propagandist play *Atlantic Convoy*, using the incident of a merchant ship under submarine attack to convey an encouraging message about the bravery and stoicism of the ordinary sailor. It was for this production, broadcast on both the Home and the Overseas Services in June 1941, that Laurence Gilliam (Assistant Director Features) advised his department that Hanley, 'a

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[212] According to Elizabeth Berridge, who was a mutual friend of the Hanleys and the Pritchetts, Victor Pritchett denies that his story 'The Sailor' is based on Hanley. Yet the very incongruity of the situation - the working-class sailor thrown into the world of the writer and his neighbour, 'the colonel's daughter' - has a vague parallel with Hanley's own sense of discomfort in a world which Timmy and Pritchett would have shared (Berridge, 1996; Pritchett, 1968, pp. 9-29).

[213] Barbara Burnham had become one of a number of Hanley supporters, friends and admirers at the BBC.

writer of some distinction and standing', was 'one of the authors we are particularly anxious to encourage to write for us in the immediate future' and expressed pleasure 'if a suitably attractive fee could be offered him' (BBC Memo, May 1941, No. 47). Very soon after, it was arranged that Hanley would be granted exemption from military service on the grounds that he was 'engaged on work of National Importance' (BBC Memo, 28 6 41 No 49).[214]

To judge by the numerous letters and submissions from Hanley over the next year, it was clear that he was fired by the potential of radio: not only as a morale-boosting medium for the besieged nation and its ordinary defenders, but also as an experimental form in itself. At the same time as he was submitting ideas for the home-front - short programmes on dockers and railway workers - he had an idea for a play about his favourite Russian composer, Mussorgsky, and he was keen to put at the BBC's disposal his 'expertise' as a writer with much knowledge and experience of the sea. His greatest enthusiasm was for the regular magazine programme devoted to the Merchant Service, *Blue Peter*, produced by Peter Watts, for which he had some radical ideas, including greater participation for ordinary sailors who would be invited to respond to views from representative groups - e.g. officers, editors of *The Seafarer* journal, and trade union officials (Hanley/Gilliam, Aug. 1941, No. 67). Furthermore, he was critical of *Blue Peter*'s over-populist approach and its 'dull, unimaginative' book section. 'Men at sea', he argued, 'want information, new facts, happenings'. There was 'too much music': sailors would prefer 'an accordionist, not some crooning June'. Hanley's more ambitious idea was for a continuous series, 'Merchant Voyage', for which he promised 'COLOUR, DRAMA, ENTERTAINMENT, INFORMATION' (Hanley/Dillon, 20 8 41, No 69). In the event, the idea was considered by Geoffrey Bridson (Gilliam's Overseas Features deputy) to be suitable only for a 'one-off' and he was commissioned to write 'Round Voyage' as a forty-five minute feature. Laurence Gilliam, however, enthused over

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[214] *Atlantic Convoy* was followed by three more short features on sea subjects: *Stokers at Sea* (6 8 41); *Open Boat* (10 9 41); and *Sailors' Home* (19 9 41) (BBC, Internal Report 12 1 42).

Hanley's 'Children in Flight',[215] a concerned parent's warning against the 'drift-back' to the cities after the initial evacuation.[216]

However, as with his publishers, Hanley's relationship with BBC professionals was problematical from the beginning. This was particularly ironic since they consisted mostly of Left-leaning intellectuals who, inspired by various initiatives in the documentary film movement and working class political theatre, had, under the leadership of E A (Archie) Harding, virtually created the BBC Feature Programme in the 1930s.[217] Bridson, particularly, was committed to Harding's principles and had been instrumental, together with Francis (Jack) Dillon, Kenneth Adam and others for introducing the voice of the working-class to the BBC northern region.[218] The small côterie running war-time production, then, was largely drawn from the pre-war Manchester Left and was well-

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[215] Later broadcast as *Return to Danger* in December 1942.

[216] Yet Liam Hanley's life of nomadic excitement was exceptional. For most children, particularly those of the urban poor, the enforced evacuation at the beginning of the War - a bureaucratic nightmare hindered by the cultural problems of 'social mismatching' - was so traumatic, that in the aftermath of Dunkirk and on the eve of the Blitz 'families [...] preferred to die together if die they must' (see Calder, 1994, pp. 35-50, pp. 128-129).

[217] Harding was an Oxford-educated Marxist, whose views on the BBC were characteristically antagonistic:

> All broadcasting[...] was propaganda; because it did not attack the anomalies of the capitalist system, it became propaganda in tacit support of them... where the economic collapse had brought the people so much hardship, continuance of the system required that people should remain unheard... *all* people should be encouraged to air their views, not merely their professional spokesmen. And that went for the Working Class no less than the Middle and Upper Classes (Bridson, 1971, pp. 30-31).

[218] Harding and Bridson's 1934 'social protest' scripts included *May Day for England*, Bridson's production linking ancient custom with political activism, trade unionism and international socialism. Ewan MacColl 'snarled out' three stanzas of Bridson's unemployment 'Song for the Three Million' and subsequently became the regular 'tough, angry Voice of the People' for many dramatic and 'feature' style programmes. At the same time that unemployed MacColl was found singing in a Manchester cinema queue, Joan Littlewood was 'discovered' at RADA in London and she, too, was recruited to Bridson and Harding's campaign to create 'a new type of radio'(See Bridson, 1971, pp. 35-39).

disposed towards working-class writers like Hanley and Leslie Halward. Yet what was seemingly a productive relationship was hampered by the entrenched cultural values and practices of the institution. Bridson and his fellow staff members had always worked under a rigid BBC censorship which allowed for no spontaneous utterances on the air: despite every production being broadcast live, every word had to be scripted. Thus, for instance, Bridson's pioneering programme *Harry Hopeful*, starring the first genuinely 'popular' voice of Frank Nicholls, purported to be a travel documentary in which the 'everyman' Yorkshire dalesman talked to people in various rural locations. In actuality, however, Bridson would 'distil the essence' of what Nicholls had expertly elicited from the ordinary contributors into a script, so that what they eventually spoke live in the studio was an edited version of their own words. Bridson was proud of his creation of Harry Hopeful -'something of a national figure', whose 'theme song was whistled in streets' - yet what he considered a representation of 'the toughness and humour inherent in the Northern character' was in fact a careful re-structuring for the general listener by a mediating professional (Ibid, pp. 55,56).[219]

The attitude to Hanley evident in various internal memoranda betrays some of that characteristic fastidiousness which finds the rawness of the unmediated voice unacceptable. For instance, although Laurence Gilliam was impressed by 'the force and imagination and real feeling' of Hanley's 'Mussorgsky' script, it was for him 'so completely unorganized' that Jack Dillon was asked to 'see if there is any chance of getting him to work for us in a more workmanlike way' (BBC Memo, 29 12 41, No. 107). However, such was Hanley's esteem within the BBC that it was eventually decided to offer him a three month writing contract, provided he worked at Brock House where he would learn 'broadcasting technique' at first hand. By May 1942 he was in post, but

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[219] He also prided himself on having more or less inspired the Theatre Workshop movement which Littlewood and MacColl subsequently created out of Manchester and on having created Harry Hopeful's successor, *Billy Welcome*, who in the person of the immensely popular Wilfred Pickles, became the war-time propagandist voice of the working class (Ibid pp. 70,71). However, for a disillusioned view of the relationship between middle-class staff and working-class contributor see for instance MacColl and Littlewood's own recollections (MacColl, 1990, pp. 230-237; Littlewood, 1994, pp. 115, 131-134).

unfortunately, Hanley's stay at Brock House did not prove fruitful. From the BBC's viewpoint, he was offered every assistance by Bridson (BBC Internal Report, 11 11 42) but Hanley complained that the expected 'liaison with a producer' did not happen and in the absence of any help, he was constantly submitting ideas of his own which seemed to gain approval from certain quarters, but were never acted upon (Hanley/Gielgud, BBC 6 11 42). A typical point of contention, was the commissioned feature on the 'common soldier', 'My Name is Atkins', for which, because of its rather negative tone, Hanley was provided with a military advisor 'to guide him on the things to be avoided or stressed' (BBC Memo, 10 8 42). However, the submitted script was clearly an embarrassment, since none of Hanley's urgent requests for a response were answered (BBC Internal Report, 11 11 42). It was sent to the War Office Liaison Officer who found it had 'got the War spirit extremely well' but declared himself 'dead against all stories dealing with **glorious retreats**' (BBC Memo, 5 10 42, emphasis added). One BBC reader was so 'worn out and very depressed' by the script that he thought 'Goebbels might have written it', while Jack Dillon finally reported to Gilliam, 'the tone is all wrong, playing entirely in the keys of hardship, disaster and retreat' (BBC Memos 6 10 42, 13 10 42).[220]

Wartime Writing

The trouble with Hanley's writing, then, was that it had captured only too well the mood of a nation worn out by the heavy bombing and dispirited by the Dunkirk retreat. Nothing more was submitted for the duration, but Hanley nevertheless continued to make his own contribution through the novel - he had no fewer than three published - and through essays and short stories in a variety of journals and newspapers. Yet Hanley's writing during this period was not consistently optimistic or propagandist. Although both *The Ocean* (April 1941) and *Sailor's Song* (April 1943) were primarily inspiriting in their representation of maritime heroism, *No Directions* (published virtually simultaneously

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[220] One final humiliation for Hanley was that the actual broadcasts of his features *Return to Danger* (Home Service 15 1 42), and the Mussorgsky play *Shadows Before Sunrise* (Home Service 6 12 42) were re-written in house, because he had refused to make the necessary 'cuts, alterations or additions'. Consequently, he received a reduced fee (BBC Contract Memos, 8 1 42, 23 9 42).

with *Sailor's Song*) represents a radical departure.[221] Hanley's novel was among a number of fictional representations of the home-front experience - particularly the London Blitz - an indication that not all wartime stories were concerned with morale-boosting or military heroism.[222] Some eminent examples of such writing came from the established experimentalist Henry Green, and the newly discovered short story writer William Sansom. Both men, like Stephen Spender, had enlisted in the Auxiliary Fire Service and had experienced the worst of the London Blitz. However, what often redeems such representations of violence and destruction are those intimations of new encounters between classes which, in the spirit of Calder's 'People's War', are expressive of a putatively unified Britain. In Sansom's stories of firefighting (collected in *Fireman Flower*, 1944) individual voices tend to be subsumed beneath the more urgent representation of cataclysmic events, as though humanity were reduced to some basic existential level in the face of a disintegrating external world. Yet, as in 'The Wall' and 'Building Alive', it is not so much the destruction - almost lovingly lingered over - as the virtually miraculous survivals which leave the more lasting impression. The climactic moment of the former recalls that cinematic 'miracle' of Buster Keaton's when he is framed by the window space of a falling house in *Steamboat Bill*:

> There was an incredible noise - a thunderclap condensed into the space of an eardrum - and then the bricks and the mortar came tearing and burning into the flesh of my face. Lofty, away by the pump, was killed. Len, Verno and myself they dug out. There was very little brick on top of us. We had been lucky. We had been framed by one of those symmetrical, oblong window spaces. (Sansom, 1963, p. 16)

Here, the names are emblematic of the new kinds of inter-class relationship being forged by the emergency situation. In Green's *Caught* (1943), such a relationship is at once more

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[221] Although the slim volume of stories *At Bay* was to follow a year later, this was Hanley's last novel for Faber. *Sailor's Song* was the first for the small firm of Nicholson & Watson, run by John Roberts, who was eventually to embark on the only Uniform Edition of Hanley's work with a reprint of his first novel, *Drift*, in December 1944.

[222] There was one eminent best-selling example of how a kind of optimism can be recovered out of despair in Richard Hillary's *The Last Enemy* (1942), whose scarred and dejected airman finds new inspiration in the Blitz (Hillary, 1956, pp. 176-183).

problematical and yet more developed. As in Green's earlier *Living*, the authority of the narrative derives from the author's proximity to a class with which he has, through circumstance, come into daily contact.[223] *Caught* embodies an object lesson in the possibility of inter-class solidarity. For most of the novel, the central character, Richard Roe, born in circumstances of privilege, lives a curiously inactive limbo existence characteristic of the 'Phoney War', which parallels his own egregious position among the working class. It is not until the very end of the novel, when an actual fire-fighting experience is described, that Roe relates to his sister-in-law, Dy, the elation he felt at his first engagement:

> In some fantastic way I'm sure you only get in war, we were suddenly alone and forced to rely on one another entirely. And that after twelve months' bickering. Each crew was thrown upon itself, on its own resources. The only thing to do was to keep together. (Green, 1978, pp. 182, 183)

It is in such terms, where human activity is united toward the common goal of survival, that novels of the Blitz are construed as effective propaganda. Yet Green's representations of working-class characters are deeply ambivalent. Despite an ostensible expression of solidarity, the depiction of daily life at the auxiliary station is one of division and intrigue. The First-War veteran, Piper, is revealed to be regularly informing on Roe's chief and instructor, the professional, yet inept, sub-officer Pye: the latter is represented as a 'disillusioned trades unionist [who had] been betrayed by his own people [whose] own class was putting his job in peril' (Ibid, p. 133). Piper dies in an air raid, and Pye, oppressed by accusations of professional misconduct, commits suicide. Yet Roe feels mysteriously connected to the latter: Pye's mad sister had earlier abducted Roe's young son and it is Roe who discovers the unfortunate fireman with his head in a gas oven. However, such connections are not made through any elected affinity: it is only through a precarious and arbitrary association, one made in the world of men, beyond the limits

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[223] In the case of *Living*, Green, as heir to his family's engineering firm (Pontifex of Birmingham), had elected to learn the business by working his way up through stores, iron and brass foundries, then finally to 'coppersmith', working an eleven-hour day and sharing to an extent the pastimes and habits of the working class. (Green, 1979, pp. 236-246)

of Dy's comprehension, that Roe seeks for some bond:

> "I wonder what's the meaning of it all?" she asked
> [...] "I know this," he announced in what, to him, was direct answer, "you've always been most unfair to Pye."
> [...] "What d'you mean?"
> He could not look at her. He knew, if he did, that it would break down, that he would not be able to go on, that Pye would be nothing; because he now knew the whole experience was almost over. (Ibid, p. 194)

The uncertainty of feeling produced by Dy's scrutiny betrays the mythical notions underlying the 'People's War'. The real social relations are not fundamentally changed by the Second World War, only obscured or suppressed. Conversely, in Hanley's *No Directions*, no such class fantasy nor masculine posturing can be discerned: the class lines are clearly delineated. It has become almost canonic in terms of its 'war novel' status, having been critically grouped together with *Fireman Flower*, *Caught* and Greene's *Ministry of Fear*.[224] The critical consensus commonly refers to its Joycean 'stream-of-consciousness' technique, the accent on the quality of 'feeling' in its diversity of characters, and its 'convincing picture of the surreal horror the Blitz must have been' (Hewison, 1988, p. 51). Yet such a reductive interpretation misrepresents its quite specific clash of class positions within an apparently chaotic range of perspectives.

Hanley's opening scene introduces a new device into his symbolic repertoire: the socially disruptive figure of 'the drunken sailor'. Having established his heroic and even noble status in *The Ocean* and *Sailor's Song*, the sailor is now being deployed as a violent intrusion into a genteel and complacent bourgeois domain. It is not only the bombs which shatter the Chelsea tenement house, but also the refracting and distorting ingress of the sailor who, in a drunken delirium, believes the 'sea' of fragmented glass upon which he has fallen to be the fearful ice of the Arctic. Thrown into the tenement hallway by an impatient air-raid warden, Johns is abetted in his carnivalesque invasion by a young working-class woman, Celia, who is in search of Clem, an artist for whom she used to

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[224] See for instance Hewison, 1988 p. 51; Munton, 1989, pp 41-43; and Bernard Bergonzi, 1993, pp. 30-31.

sit as a model. In the ensuing, condensed narrative the voices of the working class are just as much a threat to the precarious civility of the house as the nightly visitors overhead. At stake are the civilized values of a nation on the edge of extinction, its exemplary interior space being the ground floor flat of Miss Benson and Miss Cleate. The latter two having escaped to the country, Celia and Johns break into the 'green dream' of its vacated interior and raid its store of drink. Yet this is no ordinary debauch: Celia's remark to Johns - 'You've got a palate' - is a punning recognition not only of his taste, but of his artist's sensibility, and she gradually draws out of him the narrative of his terrible encounter with the ice (Hanley, 1990b, p. 47). Johns' sense of horror derives from his discovery of a comrade, frozen in death to a stricken radio mast he had been sent to repair in an Arctic gale:

> ... froze there, legs froze, face froze, arms stretched out reaching for something, ends, picking up ends, what the black sod had smashed. I didn't say aye aye, I just looked at him, made you think of Christ, two pieces of wood.
> (Hanley, 1990b, p. 55)

A counterpart to Johns' ice-fear is the nightly menace of the bombers which induces, from Celia's perspective 'the cosmic feel, the coldness, the *utter* feel' (p. 83). That sense of the coldness, the 'feel' which is at once utterly devoid of feeling is what unites both Celia and Johns: their combined perception of something ultimately reifying, non-human lurking within everyday human experience and events. The function here of the working-class characters is homologous with that of the artist: to re-make fundamental human connections in the face of the dissociating violence of the war.

The other tenants in the four-storey house have all in one sense or another undergone some transformation into forms of 'automata', beings dominated by the knee-jerk response of the machine. Clem, the artist, exists only to paint, moves like a 'robot' under the controlling hand of Lena (p. 32); Jones - 'from a little country of soft valleys, of little people, of golden mouths' - in swapping the tin hat for the bowler, has become the figure of wartime totalitarian control (p. 98); while the bombers induce in 'the blue man' Robinson, the airman, a 'perpetual itch' to be 'up there, shooting those bastards down' assuaging the urge by keeping a finger continually on the volume control of his 'Philco'

(pp. 91, 133). The working-class figures of the sailor and the girl reclaim in the midst of the chaos and the crumbling civility, a fundamentally human identity and response: the sailor through an irrepressible exuberance, the girl through her re-assertion of the physical reality of the feeling subject. Clem's studio is piled with discarded canvases, among which is a naked portrait of Celia when young. In asserting her 'moral right', she steals the painting, an act which, in the face of its reifying effect, reclaims art on behalf of its object:

> And now Celia had found it, after years, herself nineteen, who thought, opening her blouse and touching with her hand, that what she touched was of that time still, nineteen, and all youthfulness there [...]
> It *was* you, you loved it, always had wanted it, you *had* it, you could hang it up, you could admire your breasts, but not his "geeny-wenius", which was in altitudes you could never see, the spirit's meanness could never melt under the feel of it, you had it, nothing else mattered. (pp. 81, 82)

Yet, Clem is not entirely condemned. Although for the greater part of the novel the emblematic artist is observed to be comically eccentric, self-absorbed, aloof, insisting that his giant canvas is also, along with the human refugees, worthy of a space in the confined basement shelter, his final gesture has a certain redemptive even heroic quality. As the bombing reaches the apex of its intensity, Clem suddenly announces his determination to see the destruction for himself and with a repeated, "I must see this. I must see this", rushes from the comparative safety of the shelter out into the night. As Alan Munton argues, there is a temptation to read what follows in an 'apocalyptic' sense, aligning it with those other 'visionaries' of wartime such as Dylan Thomas, Mervyn Peake or even William Golding (Munton, 1989, p.43).[225] However, while Clem's initial motivation might indicate some self-destructive desire for submission to the ineffable or the sublime,

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[225] For instance, Thomas's sonorous hymns to the cataclysm 'Deaths and Entrances', 'Ceremony After a Fire-Raid', 'Among those Killed in a Dawn Raid was a Man Aged a Hundred' (Thomas, 1964, pp. 117, 128, 135); Peake's surreal 'The Rhyme of the Flying Bomb' (Peake, 1981, pp. 445-468), which bears remarkable traces of Hanley in that it also has a sailor and a horse caught up in a London fire-raid and Golding's *Darkness Visible*, whose story of Matty, born out of the fiery heart of the Blitz, emblematically traces a post-war malaise to some determining non-human presence of evil in the global conflict (Golding, 1979, pp. 13-16).

what he eventually encounters - 'something white threshing in the black moving sea' - reveals a differently constructed aesthetic. Clem's discovery of a white horse running wildly along the burning streets is at once both symbolic and realistically vivid. Catching hold of the trailing reins, the artist allows himself to be dragged along feeling, 'electric waves running across its back [...] the world itself [...] shaking under the beast's thunder' (pp. 136,137), until it suddenly stops and, enveloped in a sudden calm, is led by the artist to safety:

> If you walked far enough you came to something green, older than steel or stone, where this beast belonged. He kept on patting its neck, he suddenly loved this beast, a giant trust lay between them, first demented and now calm, it would go where he went. (pp. 137-138)

Celia eventually absconds with her precious portrait, Johns is killed when the door is blown off the shelter in the air-raid, yet their disappearance from the text leaves an after-echo which resonates with Clem's final grasp at the living vibrant horse. While Johns's death and Celia's escape read, in Adorno's sense, as 'non-affirming' expressions of 'social reality', they remain firmly connected with the novel's core critique of modernity and, paradoxically, wedded to what contradicts their implicit refusal of the consoling rôle of art. Clem's act is, therefore, a symbolic resolution of their contradictory position: an expression of art's redemptive quality, and an uncharacteristic Hanleyan affirmation from within the dead world of mechanized destruction.

Echoes and Aftershocks

Such a declaration from the heart of modernity's destructive power is commensurate with Hanley's increasing propensity to resolve artistic contradictions and is symptomatic of a crisis in his class position. Throughout the war Hanley remained actively committed to the cause of his first loyalty, the ordinary seaman, submitting articles devoted to the war effort which were, however, not uncritical of governmental failures to guarantee decent conditions.[226] Yet his actual experience of the war had much less to do with active

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[226] Compare, for instance, Hanley's short story 'I Dream About Them Waves' in *Lilliput*, a magazine suited to 'the national mood of jaunty defiance' (Sullivan, 1986, p. 230) with his article 'The Merchant Navy' in *Time and Tide*. In the former a barmaid is

participation and more to do with forging new personal alliances and allegiances far removed from his original social milieu. Hanley continued to be published by the more liberal/ conservative magazines and wrote many morale-boosting articles for the British Council's own journal, begun in 1939, *Britain Today*. However, he was also favoured by the more culturally progressive phenomenon of the Second World War, the boom in short story publishing generated by the proliferation of anthologies dedicated to 'new writing'. Reading habits had changed during the war, primarily due to emergency restrictions on paper supplies, but also because of the necessary limitations placed on leisure time. Short stories, prose pieces and poetry, unpopular before the war, were suddenly in demand, yet it was illegal for anyone to inaugurate new magazines. Since there was no such restriction on book publishing, the rules could be circumvented by the production of 'camouflaged magazines' in the form of prose and poetry anthologies.[227] Hanley had already established a relationship with John Lehmann whose *New Writing* No. 3 contained the former's 'Day's End', and he was again included in its wartime successor, *Penguin New Writing*, the most successful and widely read of the new form.[228] However, he was also involved with the equally comprehensive and innovatory *Modern Reading*, founded in the same year as its rival, in 1941, by Reginald Moore.

Reginald Moore, known to his friends as Graham, had been an admirer of Hanley's

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incredulous of a seaman's story of how he couldn't get a meal on a train, yet is in adulatory awe of the much publicized tale of his 'open boat' heroics. Couched in humorous terms, it is an object-lesson in the stoical resistance of the ordinary seaman, yet as Hanley points out in the article, '[the sailor] has no illusions. The adulation, the decorations, the orations and the perorations, the thanks and the claps and the headlines leave him cold'. The reality is that the daily confrontation of such men with the hazards of the sea - let alone the constant threat of attack - is met with a callous official disregard for their ordinary comforts and safety (Hanley, 1941, p. 790).

[227] See the chapter 'New Writing' in Hewison, 1988, pp. 86-107.

[228] Lehmann had written to Hanley in December 1935, asking for a story for the first volume of *New Writing* (eventually published in Spring 1936), but Hanley, already deep into other projects, was unable to comply. Although clearly a Hanley enthusiast, Lehmann also rejected much of his recent work, preferring 'those sea stories [...] which you're so damned good at' (Lehmann/ Hanley, 16 12 36) but continued to ask for contributions up until the end of the war.

early novels and short stories since the 1930s when he had himself been unemployed.[229] Moore had written to Hanley, inviting him to contribute to his new anthology and it was while the latter was working for the BBC at Brock House during the summer of 1942 that they met at the Victory Bookshop in Victoria St, which Moore was then managing.[230] The two instantly became friends and such was the strength of the mutual rapport with both Moore and his wife, the novelist Elizabeth Berridge, that within a few months of moving back to Llanfechain, the Hanleys invited them to the village where they stayed for a few weeks.[231] By March 1943, the Moores had moved to 'Gellis', the small cottage Hanley had found for them and their small child, and the quartet was later augmented by James's former colleague at the BBC, Leonard Cotterell and his wife. For a short time was established a small 'expatriate' community of ostensibly pacifist or anti-War English writers and artists with Moore and Berridge at its gregarious heart. It was, according to villagers, their first experience of outsiders, although a number of the local inhabitants were English rentier land-owners. Moore was a prodigious and tireless editor, founding besides *Modern Reading* (1941-52), *Selected Writing* (1941-46) *Bugle Blast* (with Jack Aistrop)[232] and *The Windmill* (with Edward Lane, 1944-48), as well as the

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[229] I am grateful to Elizabeth Berridge for the following biographical details (Conversations and interview with the author; access to correspondence between the Hanleys and the Moores).

[230] Elizabeth Berridge remembers Hanley being so bored by his brief period at Brock House - a building of narrow corridors and little windowless cubicles - that he invented an infestation of mice to annoy the management (Berridge, 1996).

[231] Both Berridge and Moore had expected, from a reading of Hanley's novels, a giant of a Stoker Bush:

> I naturally imagined him to be a huge fellow - probably a tattooed chest you see - and I opened the door, and, 'It can't be - can't be James Hanley!! A nice quiet cunning little fellow, something between a ferret and a rabbit.

Yet in the same interview, Hanley remembers a Welsh incident, where in order to pacify an irate Graham, he had held him upside down, invoking the Spanish saying: 'If you don't shut up, I'll cut your head off close to your feet' (Moore, 1978).

[232] *Bugle Blast* began life as *The Bugle*, started by Jack Aistrop for his unit of the Royal Engineers, and was dedicated solely to the writing of those serving in the armed forces.

paperback short story series The Hour-Glass Library for Maurice Fridberg and the hardback anthology *Stories of the Forties* (with Woodrow Wyatt 1945). *Modern Reading* became the alternative force of cultural resistance to *Penguin New Writing* for wartime writers and readers - particularly those in the armed forces - with sales of 150,000 per number. The small boilerhouse at 'Gellis' was not only its office, receiving some 200 manuscripts a week, but a centre and a haven for war-weary literary friends and would-be poets.[233]

The Hanleys and the Moores became devoted friends despite the differences in age.[234] It was a relationship which encouraged a more socially disposed side to the Hanleys: walking, collecting firewood, blackberry picking, playing shove halfpenny on Hanley's slate board, draughts and canasta.[235] Intellectually they had a great deal in common: a dislike of the war, a hatred of authoritarian methods, the absurdity of emergency regulations. As Berridge recalls:

> We were very satirical about these great gestures of the war: we never listened to Churchill's speeches, I couldn't bear all that bombast. We'd been through the bombing ourselves, we were so fed up with, 'you can take it'. We'd been through it from 1939-43, having been bombed out [from the flat in Queensgate]. (Berridge, 1996)

Above all, however, it was writing and its practice which most pre-occupied them. Hanley would argue with Moore about the iniquities of publishers; the latter was always anxious about *Modern Reading*, how he couldn't get enough paper, how all the numbers,

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[233] Among these were the editor and labour politician Woodrow Wyatt, Stefan Schimanski, who started the magazines *Transformation* and *Kingdom Come* and was later killed in action; poet Kay Dick, Catherine Farrell (later the Moore's literary agent) and the poet John Hall who worked for *Encounter* and was, like Graham, a conscientious objector (Berridge, 1996).

[234] Elizabeth Berridge was in her early twenties (born 1920), Gerald Moore was five years older.

[235] Further evidence of Hanley's chronic sense of social unease is again revealed by the fact he was frequently observed to cheat at cards. That 'he loved to win' reveals a compulsion to succeed in circumstances of social competition (Berridge, 1996).

and consequently the writers' fees, were always held up. All were 'on a knife edge', all trying to write books and stories to keep going. Moore's 'great idea' was to keep alive the writing. In forewords to *Modern Reading* he proclaimed his conscious philosophy, founded on a spiritual recognition of 'man's better nature'. It was important to maintain the spirit of the people, which would sustain them beyond war. He believed that after the war, the more authentic sense of its history and experience would not come from the speeches of politicians, the exploits of the military leaders but from the stories and poems of the ordinary participants (Berridge, 1996). The anti-authoritarianism of *No Directions* and the commitment to the values of ordinary endurance and survival displayed in *The Ocean* and *Sailor's Song* clearly align Hanley with the shared attitudes of that group. Moreover, after the displacements and uncertainties of the earlier part of the war, here was some semblance of stability among like-minded friends with a shared sense of social purpose located within his beloved Wales. Some of Hanley's writing in the aftermath of the war - e.g. the short story, 'Another World' (1947) and the novel *Emily* (1948)[236] - struggles to salvage some hope out of the devastation, yet the greater tendency is towards an articulation of a deeper and more lasting disillusionment which the end of hostilities, despite the prospect of a political and social revolution, did little to abate. Discernible here are gaps and fissures opening up within traditionally stable groups across the social spectrum and there is evidence of a pervasive sense of breakdown. There is little of that desire for resolution in *No Directions*: far more prevalent in Hanley's writing of the later forties, is that greater recognition of social disunity that the novel otherwise conveys. Hanley's characters have become irretrievably damaged, both physically and psychologically, more at odds with the contemporary world. Such writing is representative of a widespread malaise as the potentially liberating effects of socialism failed to materialize and some writers were turning to the past - and to the Right - in the quest for greater social stability and cohesion.[237]

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[236] Although, according to a letter to the Moores this was finished as early as 1945 (Hanley/ Moore, 9 10 45).

[237] On post-war political disillusionment see the chapter 'The God that Failed' in Hewison, 1981, pp. 1-32.

It was not that Hanley was expressing any overtly right-wing tendencies, since the process of his disaffection from political and class affiliations was chronic, contradictory and never complete. However, there are noticeably new elements in Hanley's writing which reflect his recently adopted social milieu; characters and situations, for instance, taken from the rentier society of local Anglo-Welsh landowners. The latter had recently ousted the older families like the Bonnor-Maurices, well represented in the parish churchyard as military colonizers, whose traditional family seat was Bodynfoel Hall, where the Hanleys rented the Lodge.[238] The other group were families such as the Chapel-Gills, from whom the Moores rented 'Gellis' and later the small mansion of Glanbrogan Hall. The Gills, as they were known, were originally from Liverpool, 'not what the Americans would call old money' but 'commercial people who had made their money [in cotton] then settled in' (Berridge, 1996).[239]

Such changes in Hanley's work were first revealed in two short stories included in Hanley's fourth wartime volume, *At Bay and Other Stories* (1944). While it consists mostly of previously published material from Hanley's Bodley Head days, 'Brother Geoffrey' and 'The Brothers' are reprinted from his recent anthology contributions.[240] Although the disturbing contingency of a death provides the focus for each story, they do

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[238] The 'pedigree' of the Bonnors is shown in the Parish Register to date back to the 11th century. The name of Maurice was added to comply with a condition of inheritance from the English branch of the family in the mid-19th century (Llanfechain, 1872, pp. 64-68).

[239] This was the kind of world satirized by Nigel Heseltine in his *Tales of the Squirearchy* (1946). Heseltine, a son of Philip Heseltine (the composer, Peter Warlock), had already made a dubious literary reputation by helping the eccentric Count Potocki of Montalk (a friend of Charlie Lahr) to edit *Right Review* in 1936, redeeming himself somewhat by editing the journal *Wales* from 1939-40, to which he'd been a frequent contributor. He was one of a number of local writers (born in Montgomery) whom Hanley encouraged and recommended to publishers (others included the novelist Cledwyn Hughes, born in the neighbouring village of Llansantffraid, and the now celebrated poet R S Thomas, rector at Manafon (see Chapter 15, pp. 287-288). Elizabeth Berridge remembers the 'shock and horror' when she mentioned Heseltine to the younger Chapel-Gill, Dorothy, who 'hated him because he had made fun of one of her mother's houses' (Berridge, 1996).

[240] 'Brother Geoffrey' in *Modern Reading* 3, September 1941 pp. 46-52; 'The Brothers' in *English Story* 2nd Series, 1941, pp. 195-212.

not occur within the everyday context of public catastrophe to which the world had grown used, but in the intensely private domain of the elderly upper or upper-middle class. Here, eminently, are two stories where people are not united by grief, but are more concerned with the extent to which a death in the family has 'darkened the horizon of ordered worlds' (Hanley, 1944, p. 156). Clearly the expression of a social disunity, arises out of Hanley's recent encounters with such people - for instance, at the funeral of Timmy's father, Frank Augustus Heathcote (aged 68) in 1939, who was survived by one brother and four sisters and at Bodynfoel Hall where, a number of elderly members of the local Anglo-Welsh were in residence, including, as in 'Brother Geoffrey', two eccentric spinster sisters.

However, as the war came to an end, Hanley's fiction began to register in more explicit ways its pervasive effects on individuals and social situations. Primarily, his fictional worlds - both the more usual Hanleyan milieux of the inner-city working class and the less familiar one of a provincial upper class - are becoming dominated by an increasingly mechanized modernity and the consequences of its destructive power. Across a diversity of experience people are trapped by the inability to exercise any control over their lives: the upper-class by its traditional indolence and its inability to adapt to the rapidity of social change; and the working class, in their being the new inheritors - both producers and by-products - of the post-war age. During this period, Hanley was under contract to the small firm of Nicholson and Watson owned and energetically controlled by a Welshman, J A C (John) Roberts. From the frequency of the typographical, grammatical and compositorial errors found in these volumes, Hanley was clearly not well served by its editorial staff and, as a consequence, the characteristic indisciplined and erratic quality of his stories was intensified. Nevertheless, that very uncontrolled spontaneous prose has the advantage of revealing the deeper motivations behind Hanley's new fictional developments.

In these stories set within the enclaves of Heseltine's 'squirearchy', Hanley continues to be pre-occupied by the extent of the change and disruption which the war has brought to the static and complacent domain of provincial gentility. Three short stories in particular - 'Between Six and Seven', 'It Has Never Ended', and 'Afterwards' - identify

an evident incongruity between the representatives of an older, more genteel order and a more aggressive post-war social structure.[241] To those who either venture into or bring news from the contemporary world, everything appears irrevocably changed, in decline; the language, customs and behaviour of the city dwellers somehow dehumanized or debased. For Ellery in 'Afterwards', the former academic who has failed to make an impression with his novels, London is an Orwellian nightmare of regulations, queues, reduced diets and overcrowded accommodation, inducing 'a feeling of disintegration', a sense that he is '*passé*' (Hanley, 1950b, pp. 80, 78), whereas the lack of city amenities like gas or electricity in his home-town of Clanton is represented as the primary virtue of a place which seems 'a little warmer, safer, more snug' (Ibid, p. 80). Similarly, in 'It Has Never Ended' the elderly couple who suddenly arrive at a provincial country house bring that disturbing reminder that in London 'everything's falling to pieces' (Hanley, 1947, p. 70), with the additional emphasis that Mrs Dones appears slightly mad. Whatever the difference in circumstance, 'the war' is commonly identified as the principal cause of an unspecified though widespread malaise. However, the earlier story 'Between Six and Seven' represents a newly-developing Hanleyan idea which also finds its way into the later novel of 1951, *The House in the Valley*. The suggestion in the former is that a sense of unease has been created in certain circles by the recently inaugurated Welfare State and that, paradoxically, a socially divided and entrepreneurial culture has been the inadvertent and unsought consequence of a greater opportunity for social mobility. Thus, in 'Between Six and Seven' a greater sense of stability, of level-headedness is located in the canny and resourceful servant Crilley, while the ex-colonialist land-owner and his rentier paying guests are declining into a chaotic eccentricity. It is they who are the prey to the butler's manipulations and conspiratorial dealings with the local petit bourgeoisie - the local builder and plumber - who, traditionally the servants of the squirearchy, are now gaining the upper hand. What the lady of the house most fears is the builder, Griffiths -'the man with the cap'- who is 'the sort of person who won't be satisfied until he's come in through the front door' (Hanley, 1945, p. 21).[242]

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[241] In, respectively, Hanley, 1945, 1947, and 1950b.

[242] Hanley pre-empts here the later writing of both Robin Maugham and Harold Pinter who are preoccupied with territorial and social rôle reversals in which the traditional incumbents within households or social milieux are threatened or ousted by socially

Characteristically, however, Hanley has not abandoned the working class altogether, since it is, above all, his own class which has suffered the worst effects of the war both from the inner-city bombing and the experience of military action. One of Hanley's preoccupations is with the survivors of bombing raids, those who witness or discover the death of loved ones or those who have themselves been psychologically damaged by the experience. Of these, both 'Wound Up' and *Emily* focus on working-class children as the group most vulnerable and at long-term risk, the trauma of the bombing experience inducing in the young the author's imagined forms of catatonia or psychosis. If 'realist' criteria for evaluation are applied to these stories, then the plight of Hanley's children appears somewhat exaggerated, yet Hanley's customary hyperbole is, in this case, confirmed by wartime reports on young children. Such narratives are, in effect, a retrospective justification for Hanley's efforts, through his short play *Return to Danger*, to urge on the populace the re-evacuation of its children to the countryside.[243] In the earlier short story, 'wound up' is the metaphorical description a mother gives to her daughter's symptoms; again a characteristic Hanleyan reference to human states which have been induced by mechanized intrusions (Hanley, 1947, pp. 113-117). In the novel the condition of the young child Willie, who has suffered as the result of his mother's dilemma over evacuation, is not so much locally as globally significant. What had motivated the family's decision to stay in London was the conviction that survival

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inferior yet more powerful newcomers : Pinter in, for instance *The Caretaker*, 1959, *No Man's Land*, 1974 and in his screenplay of Maugham's novel, *The Servant*, 1963.

[243] See Note 11 p. 6. Hanley's perspicacity here is supported by documentary evidence. For example from Bristol it was reported that:

> ... there were eight times as many cases of psychological disturbance among those [children] who had remained in the city each night as among those who had gone to the tunnels on the outskirts.

While a London nurse records the observable effects of bombing experience:

> 'When they heard distant gunfire, they would sit up in bed and whimper like puppies. One little girl had gone completely dumb through terror, and another small child I knew went stiff as a ramrod every time she heard the sirens. Her face turned scarlet, and she opened her mouth to scream, but no sound came. (Calder, 1992, p. 225)

depended on the primary principle of 'whatever happens, stick together' (Hanley, 1948, p. 72). However, despite this instinctual reversion to communal priorities, the imperatives of global conflict have thrust people apart and determined a general urban condition of displacement and isolation. Willie's silent, traumatized existence is only a more intensified version of his parents' solipsistic inner lives: his mother haunted by visions of the bombing, the father by those of the jungle war in the Far East. Yet the narrative concentration on a diffuse individual condition extends to the social domain which is dominated by tenemented and atomized units, presided over by the ubiquitous figure of the ostensibly kindly yet intrusive landlady, picking over the debris of broken lives.

Such an image of a recently transformed social reality is also realized in 'The Road' and 'Another World'[244] in which the lone survivor has to face the prospect of the obliteration of his or her entire family. In the former, Hanley resurrects the familiar figure of the returning sailor whose entire neighbourhood - 'the road' - has been wiped out. Significantly, the bereft itinerant is aided in the quest to locate his family, not by the Catholic Church, whose priest is too decrepit, but by the emblematic survivor of a communal past: the man in the corner shop. The shopkeeper's rôle is to be the scriptorial custodian of a previously familiar but now unrecognizable cityscape. He is not only air-raid warden, but warden of memory. In the latter story, however, the warden figure is of a very different sort. Rosie - ex A.T.S.[245] and destined for the post-war gloom of the chocolate factory - has to cope with life in the dingy boarding-house regions of Bayswater after the violent death of both parents. The landlady Mrs Leekens is, for her fifty tenants, a matronly surrogate:

> ... warden of these lives, secretless, yet secret, half-lived under weight of living; bits and ends of lives, debris, linked to road's end; to-morrow's culs de sac...

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[244] First published in, respectively, *The Windmill*, ed Reginald Moore and Edward Lane, 1946, pp 42-54; and *English Story*, 7th Series, ed. Woodrow Wyatt, 1947 pp. 11-44.

[245] Auxiliary Territorial Service: the women's branch of the land-based armed forces.

(Hanley, 1950b, pp. 144-5).[246]

Rosie's salvation comes in the figure of Sonny Graine, the one-armed former 'desert rat' and ambitious harmonica player, who one night blunders drunkenly into her room. What they share is not only the communal memory of a pre-war Paddington but the vision of a different future, a post-war prosperity incorporating a new popular cultural and demotic ethos:

> 'and then just imagine the first big cheque. Start thinking of a house, kids. See what I mean, Rosie? I'll have the best radiogram in the world, and the best television set you can buy. I'll have a real zipper of a radiogram, helps a musician. Think of a successful tour, lining them up, Brighton, Worthing, all the posh places...' (Hanley, 1950b, p. 143)

It is in such a way that Hanley ambivalently remains on the borderline between a bleakly tragic prognostication for post-war British society and the hope for a social transformation. What his immediate post-war stories particularly demonstrate is the extent to which his writing has been aided and informed by popular cultural forms and influences. 'A Walk in the Wilderness', for instance, takes its cue from one of the most popular of war accounts, fighter-pilot Richard Hillary's *The Last Enemy* (1942) which tells of his struggle with disfigurement after suffering horrific burns during an air battle over the North Sea. Like Hillary's novel, Hanley's story is implicitly concerned with the overcoming of death (as implied by the former's quotation from Corinthians)[247] yet in Hanley's version there is an extra emphasis on the nature of the disfigurement. While Hillary's face is rebuilt from skin grafts to recreate the closest possible semblance to what is recognizably human, Hanley's Hugh Anders is transformed utterly:

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[246] Hanley's representation of wardens and warden-like characters (cf. the officious Jones in *No Directions*) is reflective of the ambivalent wartime attitudes to such authority figures which could range between open resentment inherent in the nickname of 'blackout wardens' - lackeys of police and authoritarian government - to the more democratic perception of them as neighbourhood leaders and advisors (See Calder, 1992, pp. 67, 197-8). Hanley's Jones and Mrs Leekens are more consonant with Orwell's vision of a post-war world dominated by a still extant totalitarian austerity.

[247] 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death', Corinthians 15, 26 (Hillary, 1956, p. 2).

> ... the eyes with the perpetual and frenzied stare, as though some mirror behind them were continually reflecting the lower horror, the scientific jaw, the hammered mouth, the glittering false teeth. (Hanley, 1950b, p. 21)

Both stories commonly contend with the outward signs of an essentially and irrevocably changed humanity. However, while Hillary's struggle is with a self which had colluded in a defeatist morbidity - disfigurement as death's head, as death mask - Anders' fight is to overcome his visible approximation to the robotic or the non-human, confirmed by his public ridicule in the pub as 'Boris Karloff in disguise' and by his rescuer's identification of him as symbolic of 'the deceptiveness of Progress' (Hanley, 1950b, pp. 34, 46). Anders' condition is symbolic of an increasingly mechanized humanity, an idea more fully developed in Hanley's one indulgence in a post-war vogue for fictional projections of the future, his novel *What Farrar Saw*, 1946 which proposes a Britain overrun with what Hanley clearly saw as the epitome of 'progress', the motor-car. In realist terms, the kind of events which Hanley envisages - the total car ownership mobilized in one direction during the course of a day, the entire national road system congested by a single accident - is hardly plausible even in the late 20th century, yet Hanley's evocation of a sudden plague of private cars, is a unique expression of a post-war anxiety over the insidious spread of the machine.

The novel begins as Judy - a more prosperous member of the post-war working class - awaits her boyfriend Arthur, who is going to take her on a motoring trip:

> ... in walked Arthur, five foot ten and sleek, well-dressed and cute-looking; black hair anchored securely in its grease-bed, long white hands with dirt-blocked finger-nails. (Hanley, 1946, p. 9)

Arthur is defined, not only by his adherence to an unofficial wartime entrepreneurial culture - he is the quintessential 'spiv' - but also by his emblematic association with the machine he serves. He has 'dug up' his Austin Seven which he had concealed during the war to avoid its compulsory appropriation, and is now 'endeavouring to contact the soul of the car, buried away this [sic] last four years' (Ibid, p. 13). However, as their journey progresses, the dream of a solitary weekend away to John O'Groats is marred by an

increasing presence of other road users, whose class status is signalled by car-model: Humber, Lanchester, Daimler etc. The social struggle in Hanley's 'condition of England' novel, however, is defined not primarily through class, but in terms of a more conventional temporal division between a declining rurality and an invasive modernity. Everything to do with the car is destructive, imperative, a logical extension of wartime habitual conformity, a willingness to be carried along by a technologically determined social momentum. The inevitable collapse of the relentless juggernaut occurs at precisely that geographical and social location which implicitly resists the logic of industrialism, the radically alternative domain of the farmer Farrar, whose daily routine of milking is violently interrupted by the invasion of the marooned motorists in search of the essential tourist provisions of toilet and tea. What Hanley does is re-invoke in one of the quieter corners of England the ambience of wartime: the emergency storage of bodies, airdrops, queues, rationing, and finally evacuation to the railway stations through the use of outmoded farmcarts. In fact Flo Farrar's sudden cry 'Oh, God! it's all begun again' (Ibid, p. 49) is an uncanny prescience of a later cold-war ideology which was to dominate the minds and imaginations of the post-war generation. The whole technological nightmare finally provokes two antithetical yet not wholly unrelated responses to the crisis: the descent into madness of the farmer's wife, for whom the 'accident' has reawakened old fears of her experience of the Coventry blitz, and the more optimistic transformation of Arthur and Judy, who, through their imposed contact with the rural life have rediscovered a lost sensibility.

It is significant that in Hanley's chaotic yet politically acute narrative, administrative decisions to resolve the crisis are reached in isolation from the ordinary participants - 'techno-fix' solutions ordered by an ineffectual and inept civil service - while the more effective resolution is achieved by a local and autonomous group of farmers and a working-class constabulary. Similarly, Hanley's other social summary of the post-war crisis, his pseudonymous novel, *The House in the Valley*, is also concerned with ruling-class ideologies and their abrogation of traditional responsibilities and effective control.[248] Its social orientation, again, derives from Hanley's recent experiences of rural

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[248] Originally published under Patric Shone, London: Jonathan Cape, 1951.

communities. One earlier response to the formation of new social relations had been the short story, 'The Lost Sailor' (1945), which, like *No Directions*, has a drunken sailor blunder into the social space of respectability, disrupting the composure of a provincial hotel. Such a preoccupation is again further evidence of Hanley's ambivalence toward his changing class status. Although, by now, the Hanleys were firmly established among the 'expatriate' community of artists and professionals, such fictional expressions of class antagonisms are a clear indication of Hanley's chronic feelings of discomfort when, through Timmy's natural inclination to mix with her own class, he is plunged incongruously into a more rarefied and demanding social environment. A number of witnesses have testified to Hanley's inordinate shyness at parties and other gatherings and to his inability to cope with the demands of social drinking, yet also to his wife's various strategies to avoid any embarrassing confrontations.[249] Expressive at once of a social inferiority and a class defiance, the novelistic trope of the drunken sailor has become, for Hanley the signifier of both an actual and a metaphorical class struggle.

A more developed means of expressing these unresolved and possibly insoluble contradictions, is to be found in *The House in the Valley*. The metaphorical site of struggle is again the country house domain of the provincial upper class, but in this case the emblematic figure who disrupts its air of indolent complacency is a young child. As Liam Hanley has claimed, the novel's narrative setting and ambience are very much redolent of the time he was first taken to Bodynfoel Lodge soon after his parents had settled in. He, just like the young Robert of the novel, was suddenly confronted with the new environment of the country house, 'The Greys' of the novel being an imaginative recreation of the Bonnor-Maurice's Bodynfoel Hall.[250]

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[249] One such device was the precautionary measure of ordering a car or taxi to take them home at a pre-arranged time: see interviews with Berridge, Liam Hanley, Baker, Froud (1996).

[250] According to Liam Hanley, Bodynfoel Hall was 'definitely the setting for *The House in the Valley*':

> 'I was not involved in the move, [but was later] driven from Betws-y-Coed by a woman in trousers, which seemed somewhat unusual at the time, by a Miss Plum who was Ma Matthews' general factotum at Bodynfoel Hall: it was one of the few

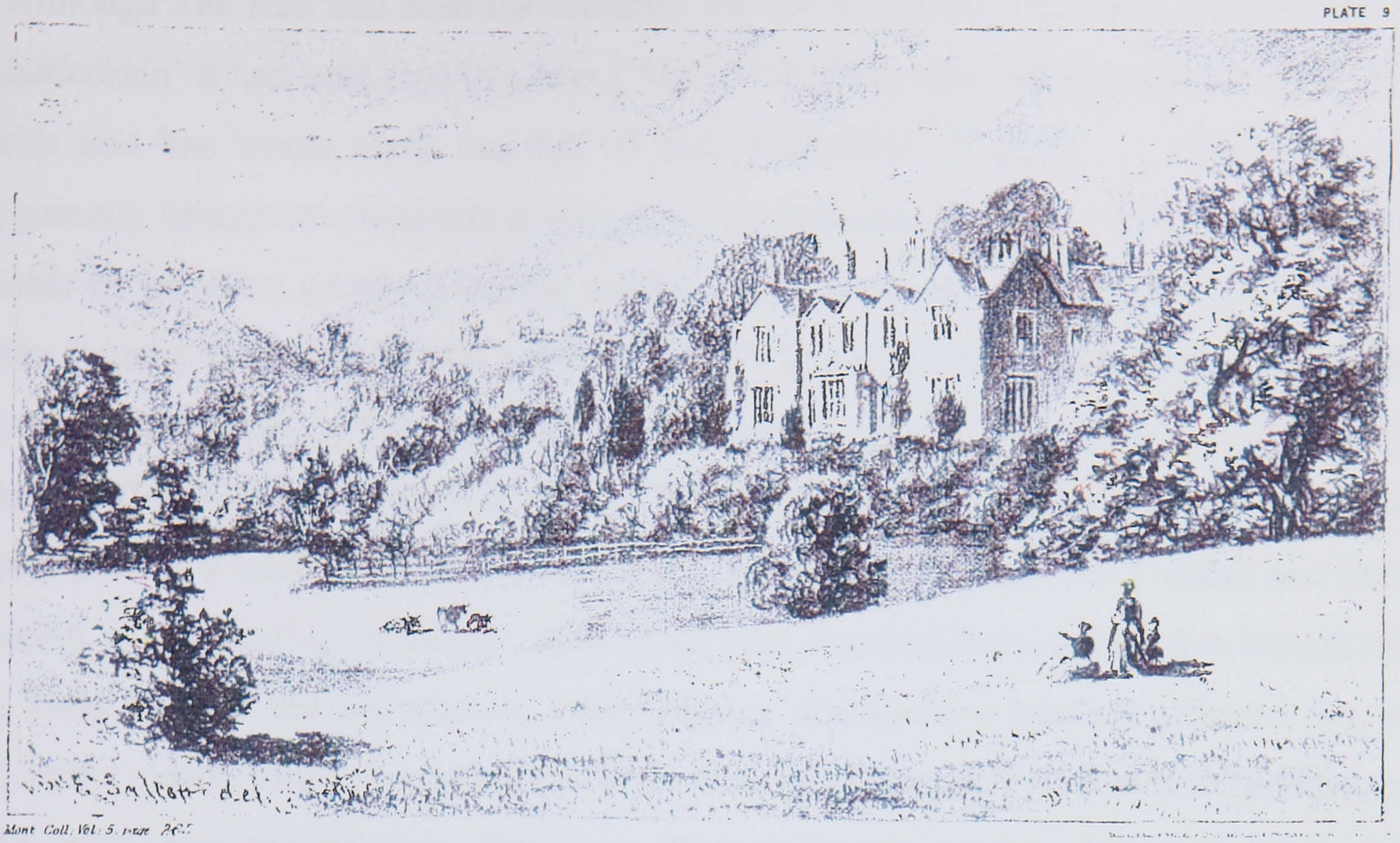

Figure 8: An engraving of Bodynfoel Hall after it was built in 1846

Figure 9: The Lodge, Bodynfoel, photographed in 1992

Although The Hall had been for centuries the domain of the 'principal grand people of Llanfechain' it had been sold to a Mrs ('Ma') Matthews, who had recently returned from India and 'the whole place was full of Indian artefacts' (Hanley, L, 1996). She had apparently turned the place into a very private communal residence, made economically viable by its select group of paying guests. There were the Miss Finches, 'a very thin Miss F and a very large Miss F'; Major Trevor: an extraordinary man who used to walk about in plus-fours, a pith helmet and, in summer, would carry a sort of fly whisk; Duncan Collett, an American: known as 'drunken Duncan', who used to catch the train several times a week to attend the Liverpool cotton exchange, and Sir Duncan and Lady Swann, a 'very distinguished pair' who would take constitutionals and lived as though still in India.[251] Here the ten-year-old Liam Hanley developed a kind of affection for its eccentric elderly residents and learned from them and his mother what was to be expected of a young man of their class. However, although the new countryside environment was more conducive to his father's need for solitude, there were aspects of its social constitution which were clearly a source of contention.

Although it is necessary to be wary of placing too much interpretative significance on a writer's biography, it is here nonetheless relevant again to invoke Jameson's reading of Balzac's *The Black Sheep* (Chapter 11 p. 169) in which family relationships are often also expressive of wider social class relations. *The House in the Valley*, opens with a scene taken straight from Hauptmann's *The Weavers*, which Hanley knew well and admired: the boy Robert's father has died as they both slept beneath the same blanket (cf. Hauptmann, 1959, pp. 30,31). The classic representation of extreme poverty, however,

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cars going around that part of the world'.

It was also the only place in Llanfechain which had electricity - a big mechanical dynamo. The rest of the village relied on oil lamps and candlelight until 1957 when it was finally connected to the national grid (Hanley, L, 1996).

[251] On Sundays the Miss Finches used to be collected in a pony and trap - a service provided by Humphreys, the landlord of the 'Plas-yn-Dinas' - taken to the church, then afterwards to the pub where they had boiled eggs and tea. Liam Hanley remembers Major Trevor as a very interesting, attractive man who would say things like 'Good morrow, good morrow'. The former would accompany him on his walks and be told stories about Livingstone 'as though he'd had him as a neighbour' (Hanley, L, 1996).

betrays no sense of social outrage, but serves as the dialectical opposite of Robert's soon-to-be-transformed social position. He is immediately rescued from his state of familial dereliction by a bowler-hatted retainer from his grandfather's house, of which, owing to his mother having married out of her class, Robert has had no previous knowledge. Since his mother, Elizabeth, has long since adulterously absconded to Italy, the large country house becomes his temporary home and the narrative the site of a class struggle between the fond memories of the boy's lorry-driver father - the physical closeness of working-class life - and the initially forbidding yet seductive pleasures offered by the eccentric family.

Hanley's fictional House is inhabited by the Mortimers, the remnants of a declining provincial aristocracy, all of whom resemble aspects of his experience of the upper class: the elderly Gabriel and his second wife Celia[252]; the middle-aged spinster daughters (one fat and one thin); and the two sons: the ex-colonial hunter Geoffrey and the defrocked priest, Arthur (an ironic reference to Timothy Hanley's clergymen relations and ancestors). Initially, the text establishes a basic antagonism between the senior incumbents who are keen to represent to the boy his matrilinear inheritance, and the boy himself who maintains a childlike solidarity with his father's class. While there is a continual insistence on the boy's resemblance to his mother - 'Your hair is so thick and so black, just like your mother's hair' - Robert insists on calling her 'the lady' [who] went away':

> 'I liked [daddy] better than mummy. He used to take me to the pictures. Once he took me for a ride on his lorry to Camden Town. We used to go to a pull-up, we used to buy fish and chips and tea and eat them on the lorry....'
> (Hanley, 1951, p. 60)

Despite Robert's growing affection for the house's more sympathetic residents - the avuncular Geoffrey, the kindly Aunt Agatha, and Thomas the general factotum - his grandparents' insistence on obedience as the first principle of his new familial relations leads him to acts of defiance, culminating in a crisis point, at which Robert deliberately

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[252] The local landowner, Berkeley Chapel-Gill had divorced his first wife Dorothy and Hanley's parents-in-law were estranged at the time of Heathcote's death.

loses himself in the wooded grounds and becomes ill from exposure.

While the boy is recovering, a possible resolution of the crisis and - implicitly the class struggle - is offered with the announcement that the boy's working-class grandmother has just learnt of his predicament and is arriving to claim him back. It is at this moment toward the end of the novel that the real struggle begins. Hanley presents us with another version of that matriarchal stoicism, of which Fanny Fury was the exemplary model. Not only does Mrs Dolphin travel all the way from Deptford to 'Greys' (located somewhere on the Wales/ England border) but necessarily walks the six miles from the station.[253] It is in the course of her journey, 'her crusade [...] her pilgrimage of the heart' that, through a stream of working-class consciousness, the reader gets a sense of the justice of her mission and the justification for her class antagonism:

> '...I'm doing my duty by him who was rarest son to me, good hard working man that never did nobody any harm 'cept himself marrying nothing less than plain whore if you ask me. I've me rights, he had his, which he never got, but I'll get mine, my son's child; no mother and never had. Somebody had to be human.' (Ibid, pp. 235, 238, 239)

Mrs Dolphin is an incongruous figure against the conspicuous ostentation of the country house interior: 'the ridiculous feather on top of the quite sensible hat, the man style boots, the worn hands, red, gnarled, grasping and releasing the sleeves of the coat' (Ibid, p. 246). She proudly speaks her accusations to the astonished family, but it is characteristic of Hanley to give equal voice to the various class positions, including Aunt Agatha's moment of humanist pleading:

> '... You must try to understand, my dear, that other people besides yourself have feelings, they are not specially the property of any particular people but are common to all since they are very human...'
> (Ibid, p. 250)

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[253] Deptford is doubly significant in that, just like Robert's family name - Dolphin - it is associated with the sea, and it was the place where Hanley's father, Edward, ended his days in a Seaman's Rest Home in 1937 (Hanley, L, 1996).

Agatha speaks the language of a regenerated class, capturing from the impotent and outmoded Gabriel both the moral high ground and the right of authority, since it is she who has engineered the timely departure of the disgraced Arthur, whose presence was a constant reminder of an inherent class degeneration. Both he and the unfeeling Elizabeth have been displaced by the symbol of the future, the young Robert, who, in the spirit of Forster's Leonard Bast, has infused into the family a new and brighter blood. Yet this is not to suggest any Forster-like novelistic resolution, since it is Mrs Dolphin who finally assumes the status of tragic heroine. Robert, forced to make the choice between two class identities, chooses Agatha and repudiates the past. Yet his decision has been influenced by a subterfuge, in which all the family collude, namely the false promise of Elizabeth's return. Mrs Dolphin's departing words to Agatha - '... you've hurt me proper, deep in me you've hurt what understands nothing and never will' - represent both a *cri de coeur* on behalf of Hanley's class and the assertion of a socially antagonistic ending.

The House in the Valley then is evidence of a continuing crisis in Hanley's class position: a novel which, at the end of a range of textual explorations of the post-war social transition, confronts the contradictions of his new situation, yet which fails ultimately to be resigned to it. Here are expressed those ambivalent feelings about the determinations of class in the construction of an identity: feelings which will be more widely yet differently inflected by a new generation of working-class writers - Alan Sillitoe, John Braine, Stan Barstow, Willis Hall, David Storey - only a few years later. For Hanley, some form of resolution of his crisis of identity will be achieved through a more conscious adoption of Wales as his spiritual homeland. In terms of the development of his writing, that will involve a final repudiation of both the sea and rural Ireland as sources of inspiration and the deployment of the Welsh rural upland as the foundation of a new aesthetic.

14. SPIRITUAL HOMELANDS: IRELAND, WALES AND THE IDEOLOGY OF EXILE.

Introduction

Whatever the pleasures and satisfactions of the Hanleys' new rural residency, the social antagonisms of *The House in the Valley* are an indication that there were aspects of its provincialism with which Hanley himself could never be wholly reconciled.[254] Indeed, what is absent from the novel is any real sense of social settlement; rather it expresses profound feelings of regret for a more stable but now irrecoverable past. Hanley's social trajectory had brought him a long way from the spiritual homeland of Ireland and its maritime traditions which, at one stage in his literary career, constituted a symbolic refuge amidst the turmoil of personal displacement and global crisis. Increasingly, neither the sea nor Ireland any longer performed that spiritual rôle, yet Hanley's damaged survivors of wartime, continue to discover resources of hope in vestiges of the past. Indeed, if any political or social future is envisaged in these stories of the immediate post-war years, it is one which, paradoxically, harks back to some form of idealized community - the corner shop in 'The Road', Farrar's rurality, Sonny's world of seaside entertainment, even Emily's dream of a new home. These symbolic resolutions would seem to concur with the summation of Hanley's Irish contemporary, Elizabeth Bowen, who identified 'nostalgia' as the 'prevailing mood' amongst post-war cultural responses because of writers' 'uneasiness in the present - the aching, bald uniformity of our urban surroundings, their soulless rawness' (Bowen, 1986, pp. 54, 59). However, true to a nature which had always been problematic and contradictory, Hanley was part of an inchoate post-war culture founded on previously established emotional or communal attachments, yet which sought to come to terms with a rapidly changing present. Although Hanley's post-war writing was often backward-looking, at times nostalgic, its commitment

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[254] As early as December 1950, Hanley was expressing to Lisa and Reginald Moore, who had that year moved back to London, his profound reservations about how 'this dump' had become 'a real *bête noire*':

> I never in my life saw so many really dull, ugly, un-interesting people within the space of an hour, not an original amongst them, not a face with any character to it. (Hanley/ Moore, 2 12 50)

to a constant search for new forms places him among those writers whose preoccupations might be with the past, yet whose tendencies are essentially anti-nostalgic, in search of new meanings.

What takes place in Hanley's diverse work of the 1950s is a struggle in which those older affinities are being gradually repudiated and new ones are taking their place. As he becomes more settled in Llanfechain, it is Wales which becomes the object of a new allegiance - not to the actual community of its living present, but to the 'imagined community' of its traditional past.[255] This is principally discovered in two significant works set in his adopted country: the fictional commentary on his local village, 'The Anatomy of Llangyllych' (1953) and the novel *The Welsh Sonata* (1954). Yet Wales is also the symbolic substitute for those primary emotions and meanings which are more deeply and ineradicably embedded. Neither Ireland nor the sea disappears entirely from Hanley's symbolic ordering since the rural uplands of Montgomeryshire incorporate significant traces of both an ancient Celtic structure of feeling and, in Hanley's imagination, a maritime ambience. The extent to which Ireland continues to be a pre-occupation is revealed in Hanley's determination to complete *The Furys* sequence of novels. The fourth, *Winter Song* (1950), in which Fanny and Denny Fury finally return to Cork, still preserves the land of his birth as the distant yet recoverable space of an uncontaminated pre-modernity, yet by the fifth and final volume, *An End and a Beginning* (1958), it has become that lost domain, forever and finally closed to the exile. Similarly in his last two Conradian novels - *The Closed Harbour* (1953) and *Levine* (1956) - the sea also figures as an irretrievable beyond, a forbidden zone to the irredeemably fallen. However, any neo-romantic tendency is, in all these later works, denied by an

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[255] The phrase is borrowed from Benedict Anderson who uses it as a shorthand term to describe how the emergence of the modern nation state is dependent upon the way disparate groups or individuals imagine themselves as communally linked. It is here deployed in the context of Welsh nationalism which, in order to define its present and future condition, depended on the idea that 'nations [...] always loom out of an immemorial past'. As Anderson also states, '[c]ommunities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined' (Anderson, 1991, pp. 11, 6). In this case 'the style' is defined by a Welsh relationship to a presumed antiquity .

increasingly pessimistic and tragic concern for fundamental human relations, particularly in closed, domestic environments. What will now be finally traced in these two final chapters are those contradictory and conflicting components of his final struggle, which, although beset by expressions of despair, still retain a core of class and communal allegiance.

Contemporary critical pronouncements on the first twenty years of post-war British writing have identified a general disillusionment with modernism and a resurgence of more traditional forms: realism in the novel and drama (including television and cinema), and less ambitious verse forms in contemporary poetry.[256] In fact, what has emerged more recently has been the recognition of a gradual blurring of previously distinct styles and a steady growth in hybridity across a range of literary expression.[257] Realism has, thus, within a broader cultural context, been recognized as only one among other literary responses, often in the space of single works, such that the consensus about what constitutes a contemporary reality continues to be contested and problematized. As already witnessed, Hanley has always been committed to the kind of writing which moves beyond the realist paradigm and this continues to be the case up to the end of his life. However, such was the multiplicity of his response after 1950, that it is difficult to categorize or identify a dominant tendency or consistency of novelistic style. What will be here argued is that such a diversity testifies, again, to a struggle with form which is symbolic of a contemporary social and individual crisis.

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[256] See, for instance re-commitments, from different political perspectives, to realism in David Lodge 'The Novelist at the Crossroads' (Lodge, 1986, pp. 3-34) and Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Williams, 1971, pp. 301-316); Al Alvarez's denunciation of The Movement in *The New Poetry*, (Alvarez, 1962, pp. 21-32) and the privileging of the 'naturalistic' tendencies of the social forms of Osborne, Delaney, Arden and Wesker (and their particular influences in television drama) over other more avant-garde directions in Pinter or Beckett (as described by, again, Williams and John Russell Taylor (Williams, 1964, pp. 304-309 and Taylor, 1963, pp. 324-5). See also Robert Hewison's *In Anger*, which sees the 1950s in terms of 'the abandonment of avant-garde approaches to art and literature in favour of a form of realism' (Hewison, 1981, pp 118-119).

[257] See, for instance Andrzej Gąsiorek, who disputes that a 'clear-cut realism/ experimentalism divide has much validity in the post-war period' (Gąsiorek, 1995, p. 180).

A major contradiction of the notion that there was a dominant return to realism in the 1950s is the degree to which many literary works were concerned with social alienation in content, expressed through a variety of formal experimentation. As such they were evidence of a re-assertion of a modernist sensibility which Charles Jencks has termed 'late modernism' (quoted in Jameson, 1991, p. 305). One of its particular manifestations was the prevalence of a range of works influenced by absurdist or existentialist modes of thought. Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* (1956) claimed a socially and culturally extrinsic position as a defining characteristic of the contemporary condition, a mood - or even sometimes a fashionable pose - which owed much to French intellectual vogues. However, what was often represented as a very abstract form of *angst* with much evidence offered from a whole tradition of literary and artistic responses, had its material base in new forms of social mobility, as afforded by the Butler Education Act of 1944, which extended a greater degree of educational and vocational opportunity to working-class and lower-middle-class men and women. That general experience tended to legitimate the supervention of a privatized literary mode - the self in a state of detachment or discovered in a more rarefied social realm - in which the outspoken or rebellious subject articulated a profound dissatisfaction with a set of inherited values and assumptions. 'Late modernism' thus reveals itself even within what were considered to be relatively conventional forms: for instance in the naturalistic dramas of the Royal Court, or in the so-called social realist novels of a new generation of working-class novelists, both of which dealt with the problems of class loyalty and individual disaffection. As with the earlier stage of modernism, these works of the later transitional stage (before the arrival of postmodernism proper) found themselves to be 'guiltily complicit' with the values of a higher cultural ethos, and there was inevitably a countervailing component which maintained a grounding in some form of class loyalty. Therefore the rebelliousness of, for instance, John Osborne's Jimmy Porter is tempered by a reversion to a conventional class identification with the sweet-stall owner, Mrs Tanner, and the ruthless striving beyond class boundaries of John Braine's Joe Lampton is morally offset by the matriarchal perspicacity of his Aunt Emily or the protective Elspeth (Osborne, 1971, p. 73 and Braine, 1961, pp. 90 and 224).

Late modernism, however, is not only defined by the expression of various forms of

social crisis, it is also evident in a variety of cultural forms which, while ostensibly part of a return to realist or naturalist artistic strategies, are actually constituted by a formal diversity in which a variety of popular and experimental styles blend and clash. For example, what is precisely interesting about Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* is its dual cultural orientation. On the one hand it relies on a more conventional aesthetic of struggle between the universal categories of life/ death, light/ darkness, love/ hate, in which the shadowy character of Jimmy becomes functional or symbolic of that inscrutable realm of the unknown, the dangerous world of adults, of sexuality which, for Jo, can mean the entry into life or death: on the other hand - principally under the guidance of Joan Littlewood - its dramatic method uses the familiar conventions of music-hall and variety, which acts as a carnivalesque antidote to the higher cultural components, bringing the dramatic struggle to a decidedly more social level. Here modernist form, as in Brecht, is mobilized on behalf of, not against, the social integrity of the working class, enabling an interrogation of its failings and shortcomings yet not undermining a fundamental class allegiance. Such a strategy can be discerned in a range of post-war works whereby a dominant cultural orientation is challenged by experimentalist methods deriving from popular or alternative cultural traditions.[258]

A Farewell to the Sea

For Hanley one of the primary means of negotiating his own position within the dominant post-war culture is through his close association with the tradition of sea writing. His intervention in a prevailing literary late modernism is to interrogate, through two significant novels, the fundamental ideology of modernism itself, as located in one of its major proponents, Joseph Conrad. Although Hanley's work devoted to the sea had, in the intervening years, effectively been superseded by other preoccupations, it returns, not as a setting, but as a major theme; but here the figural presence of the sea, formerly both a source of abundant artistic productivity and of an emotive communal allegiance, has,

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[258] Examples can be found in other working-class writing which deploys a variety of local and traditional forms of storytelling technique: e.g. the liar, the braggart figure of 'Jack-the-Lad' in Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Naughton's *Alfie*, Waterhouse's *Billy Liar*; pulp fiction or comic-strip styles in both the latter and Storey's *This Sporting Life* etc.

as a primary signifier of Hanleyan values, undergone a profound change. In *The Closed Harbour* and *Levine*, the sea is that absent presence, that unattainable domain which Conrad had represented in two relatively early works, written close together in time and sharing the familiar Conradian theme of exile: namely *Lord Jim* (1900) and the short story 'Amy Foster' (1901). In Hanley's first novel after his socially exploratory text, *The House in the Valley*, he further engages in a more specifically cultural conflict in the form of a direct challenge to the Conradian world-view, the high modernist himself becoming a site of struggle over later contemporary meanings. Marooned in Marseilles - the original seaport of Conrad's first vocation - Hanley's Captain Marius, has, like Jim, broken the unwritten code of the sea, having abandoned his ship and 'saved himself'. As such, this represents a radical departure from Hanley's earlier narratives of the seaman as heroic survivor; as with the eponymous Felix Levine of the companion novel, he has been assigned the rôle of the essential outsider: landlocked, alienated, the ultimate exile.

Yet Hanley's modernism is of a different order. Ostensibly, what Conrad's outsiders represent are radical challenges to accepted standards of moral conduct. Both Lord Jim, and Kurtz in the closely related earlier novella, *Heart of Darkness*, are the objects of reflection of the authoritative Marlow, who presents to the reader two instances in which the individual has stepped outside the established codes upholding the imperial project. Although there is a degree of condemnation of the repellent acts perpetrated by both characters, Marlow's subtle moral relativism effectively excuses Kurtz and Jim on the grounds that they acted within the context of the noble endeavour of colonialism. In Hanley it is not colonialism but, again, the circumstance of war within which socially aberrant or extreme forms of behaviour proliferate. However, Hanley's sailors no longer aspire to heroic status (as Curtain in *The Ocean* or Manion in *Sailor's Song*) and, unlike Conrad, he does not explore the possibilities of excusing Captain Marius or the sailor Levine, but places them in an irredeemable position, radically challenging the Conradian desire for redemption or the effectivity of any established notion of morality. In a world of habitual violence and military expediency, moral dereliction has become commonplace, human beings expendable. Under such conditions, the text implicitly asks, who has the right to make judgements:

> "And nobody asked whether she returned or not, perhaps they didn't care, except the poor souls who had lost men in her. And think on that. Millions dying. Who has the right to fuss about two score of men?" (Hanley, 1952, p. 68)

Madame Marius's cynical dismissal of the wartime fate of so many ships is complemented by the shipping clerk Labiche, whose consciousness of his over-zealous work for the Catholic St. Vincent de Paul Society causes him to ask, '"Am I right? What is really just?"' (p. 41), and this is followed by an apparently authorial expression of doubt in the singularly interrogative: 'Where is the truth of it?' (p. 42). In Conrad the implicit answer is that an ethical authority is constantly re-affirmed through those exceptional human beings who, despite being flawed, are worthy of redemption because of the loftiness of their calling. As has been consistently argued, this is one version of a modernist sensibility which, paradoxically, both challenges and affirms the moral rectitude of the ruling class. Other characters who served on the *Patna* are inevitably condemned by Marlow as 'no-account chaps', 'nobodies', yet Jim achieves the status of a virtual warrior-king (Conrad, 1946c, p. 46).

Hanley's Marius shares with Conrad's hero similar class origins: Jim, from 'a parsonage', an 'abode[...] of piety and peace' (Conrad, 1946c, p. 5), was, according to Marlow, 'from the right place' and 'was one of us' (p. 43), while Marius is from a family of sea-captains; his father having gone 'down with his ship in the First war' (Hanley, 1952, p. 80). However Marius is an implicit challenge to everything that Jim stands for. The steady process of regaining an honourable status after his abandonment of the *Patna* is created through Jim's guilt-ridden willingness to become *déclassé*; accepting a series of relatively lowly occupations (as water-clerk etc.) before his final restoration at Patusan to some form of rightful inheritance. By contrast, Marius's trajectory is ever downwards. Unlike Jim, Marius refuses to work in any other capacity than that of captain; a singularly futile assertion of pride since he is continually shunned by the shipping community. Whereas, via Marlow, there are constant moves to recuperate and reassert Jim's class position, Marius is hampered by the implacability of his own family and profession. He is known among shipowners and seafarers alike as 'the Nantes bum'; and his mother, Madame Marius's insistence that 'he is not like us', that 'his real place was the gutter' (pp. 80, 81) constantly undermines Marius's precarious sense of

self-esteem. As he moves from one social situation to another, the narrative method gradually strips away the outward signs of his captaincy and replaces them with a different set of class signifiers. The opening description presents him as a notably exceptional man:

> Certainly he was noticeable on the avenue, people stared at him as he passed by. The hard light of the sun was upon him, boring at his blackness, for he was black from head to foot, from his reefer jacket with its Captain's insignia to his shiny peaked cap pulled sharply down on the forehead.
> (Hanley, 1952, p. 5)

Despite his seeming defiance in the face of the evasions and indifference of the shipping office staff, there is already visible evidence of decline in 'the wisps of straw adhering to the magnificent jacket', the 'tarnished' buttons, 'the powerful wrists protruding from the sleeves like pistons' (p. 7). A further reduction in his social identity is discerned in Marius's habitual visits to a brothel, where, divested of his clothes, he displays the emblematic tattoo: the classic mark of a humbler seafaring origin. In such circumstances he is discovered to be at his most vulnerable; the prostitute, Lucy, observing that '[s]omething had gone out of him, something withdrawn, she had felt it go. [...] The eye had opened hard up against an unfamiliar darkness, something strange' (p. 64).

The most devastating and persistent attacks on his maritime standing come from his mother who relentlessly repudiates his social eligibility:

> She would see him eating, it made her think of peasants, she would note the grip of a fist on a wine-glass, as though he were holding a bunch of carrots. (p. 70)

When she burns his uniform, and replaces his Captain's jacket with a peasant's suit and cap, it precipitates a fundamental uncertainty in Marius, an increasingly unstable sense of identity and a fascination with a vision of himself in reflected surfaces. Standing outside a theatre, he is suddenly made aware of his reflection and almost immediately is mistaken for a porter. Later, as he enters a café, which is also enclosed by walls of mirrors, the waiter is struck by his 'peasant' appearance, while Marius himself is convinced, by the waiter's solicitous enquiries that he displays the outward appearance

of vagrancy (pp. 114,115).

In this way Hanley gradually builds a picture of personal and social breakdown; Marius inevitably retreating into a psychosis which attempts to resurrect a fantasized past self in the face of its present disintegration. Thus, the Conradian desire for a recoverable and sustainable seafaring nobility is called into question, most aptly by Marius's desperate attempt to re-animate a washed-up and abandoned ship: shouting orders to a non-existent crew, operating a defunct telegraph lever and trying to work the broken-down machinery below. Moreover, such a representation of dereliction, is not confined to the docks and the delapidated streets of Marseilles, but permeates every social situation in which Marius is discovered. A radical uncertainty is thereby created as to the exact location of any ethical supremacy. The family home, the brothel, the shipping office, the institutions of Catholicism all equally convey an atmosphere of emptiness, meaninglessness and moral vacuity: even the priest 'gave the impression that at any moment he might jump up and run out [...] like somebody who has got into the wrong house by mistake' (p. 72). If anyone still adheres to the prevalence of Catholic values then it is the altruistic Labiche, who, struggling against a chronically low self-esteem, tirelessly works for the salvation of Marseilles's lost. Yet any security of religious faith is textually undermined by a countervailing apostasy: as his superior at the shipping company remarks, '"[t]o shock Labiche [...] you've only to tell him how bloody absurd life is"' (p. 153), and the final irony of Madame Marius's pious retirement to a religious house is that she remains impervious to any suggestion of her own culpability. The fate of the traditional virtues of piety and Christian charity is that they are ineffectual, and powerless either to prevent Marius's descent into madness or to revive his mother's compassion.

If Hanley has effectively challenged the Conradian moral ascendancy, it has been through a repudiation of the elitism of Marlow's circle and its over-willingness to reclaim its own from the compromised area of maritime and imperial activity. Implicitly, the reduction in social status of Marius is Hanley's characteristic insistence on the absent presence of class as an effective antidote to assumptions of the merchant navy's unassailable probity. Yet the equal emphasis on a socially pervasive loss of meaning indicates a dearth of ethical or intellectual authority in which to ground any analysis or

critique. Colin Wilson implies that such an authority is to be located, beyond the social realm, in the phenomenon of 'the outsider': a condition which provides the necessary insights into a sense of life's 'strangeness, of unreality' (Wilson, 1956, pp. 14, 15). However, there is a problem with the outsider's stance, in that it can only ever be a philosophical or moral hypothesis. A viable outsider's existence, as Wilson claims and the fate of both Conrad's and Hanley's characters attests, is untenable: any human attempt to live asocially leads to psychosis. What Wilson advocated was a compromise in which a privatized spirituality could be bracketed off from the everyday lived experience: a Nietzschean or Hulmean anti-humanism supplemented by the teachings of the mystic Gurdjieff. In the early decades of post-war Britain such religious and asocial versions of 'existentialism' were incorporated into a number of fictional texts[259] but, although Hanley's work is neither mystical nor existentialist, his post-war novels have in common with those of his younger contemporaries, a certain bleakness of vision which is in search of a spiritual underpinning. A question remains, then, as to the status of Hanley's outsiders. Do they similarly represent an initial expression of crisis or despair in the human condition preparing the way for a retreat into spirituality, or is there textual evidence of any preferred or latent sense of social value?

What certainly can be discovered are traces of deeper childhood or familial sympathies with, for instance, the more socially compatible functions of the Catholic church and in the case of *Levine*, an adherence to the values associated with traditional or rural societies. Felix Levine is a later 20th-century version of Conrad's shipwrecked middle-European peasant who is adopted by the eponymous farm-girl of his story 'Amy Foster'. Ostensibly, Conrad's text is, for once, more conducive to Hanley's narrative approach in that it concerns one of the vast numbers of transported people - emigrants, pilgrims, coolies - who have hitherto only been represented in the mass,[260] and both share a

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[259] See Alan Sinfield's essay 'Varieties of Religion', which uses the term 'existential Christianity' to describe a post-war tendency in, for instance, Golding, Murdoch and Greene to 'privatize' the sociality of their novels, which also had in common a 'persistent recuperation of religious categories' (Sinfield, 1983, pp. 100-110).

[260] I.e., besides the pilgrims on board the abandoned *Patna*, there were the 'coolies' stowed away like so much cargo during the storm in 'Typhoon'.

nostalgia for a cherished land of the distant past. Conrad's 'mountaineer of the eastern range of the Carpathians' is from 'a cleared plot of fair pasture land on the sunny slope of a pine-clad pass' (Conrad, 1950b, pp. 121, 117) while Hanley's Polish sailor also dreams of a far landscape:

> There it was, all laid out in front of me, the moon gone in an instant, and the sun up, and the fields alive with people, bent, working, not looking up, just going forward, yard by yard, racing with the sun. And children there, laughing and shouting, playing their games, lighting up anything that they touched, just like children do. (Hanley, 1956, pp. 146)

Furthermore, both Conrad's 19th-century farmer and Hanley's 20th-century sailor have taken to the ocean, not out of choice, but through force of circumstance: the former driven from his land by poverty and the prospect of a new life in America; the latter having fled to the sea when his mother and sister were killed by marauding 'soldiers'.[261] Conrad's Yanko is a reluctant sailor and his experience of the sea has instilled in him 'that vague terror that is left by a bad dream' (Conrad, 1950b, p. 133). On the other hand, once stowed away on a ship, Hanley's Levine is glad to assume a new identity:

> And after a while I loved the ship, and the men on it. That is my life. I am a sailor. I am in this ship, and out of another. I wander. I do not care much about anything. I move about, I work, I live. That is good. I am content.
> (Hanley, 1956, p. 97)

However, both characters are confronted by an alien, forbidding and compassionless mainland Britain and its endemic xenophobia. Yanko, 'the object of suspicion, dislike and fear' feels acutely 'the hostility of his human surroundings' (pp. 113, 133) while Levine, his contentment violently shattered by the Second World War, is a refugee; nationless, a transient without papers. Yanko speaks no English and is subject to the habitual local ostracism, whereas Levine's acquired language of the sea is no advantage against a bureaucracy which peremptorily herds the dispossessed into hastily convened camps. What initially provides some grain of comfort are those aspects of a common humanity which

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[261] Although the 'soldiers' are unidentified, this presumably refers to the Nazi invasion of August 1939 (Hanley, 1956, p. 58).

most closely evoke homeland memories. For Yanko it is the steel cross on his benefactor, Miss Swaffer's, belt at which he would 'cast stealthy glances [...] and feel comforted' (p. 246); for Levine it is what he discovers outside officialdom: in the kindness of fellow itinerants and the interior of a Catholic church:

> It was wonderful. They said, 'Good evening, good night', like I'd been coming to that church for years, and even that made one feel warm. I used to feel good after that, and I didn't mind going back to that hut, and I didn't mind there being nothing in it. (Hanley, 1956, p. 208)

Thus is commonly established in two historically distinct works a textual dialectic in which a past security of communal identity acts as an effective defence against present alienation. Nevertheless, as already argued in the case of *The Closed Harbour*, it is precisely in those instances of departure from the Conradian paradigm where Hanley's own modernist position is revealed to be most problematic and complex. The major difference here lies in narrative method. Conrad's modernism is characterized by what Allon White has called 'the rhetoric of enigma', which has the dual function of creating both a sense of some impenetrable mystery surrounding the narrative, and a hint of a profound yet discoverable secret at its heart (White, 1981, pp. 108-129). This is most eminently the case in works such as *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*, whose narrative drives are generated by a reader expectation of revelation at the end of a discursive quest:

> It presents itself as an enigma both fascinating and oppressive, a threshold of initiation; but at the same time it keeps itself semantically 'unapproachable' and 'impenetrable', pushing the threshold further and further away so that it becomes impossible to cross. (Ibid, p. 119)

White offers a number of possible interpretations within this hermeneutic field, including a suggestion that Conrad's enigmatic method was symptomatic of suppressed spiritual longings, a 'literary endeavour to displace religious mystery into the form of art' (p. 122). More persuasive still is White's contention that Conrad's 'semantic obscurity' is a textual signification of the very boundary of linguistic expression; the point at which the unconscious itself enters language and 'demands' representation as 'pure enigma' (p. 124).

However, the most tantalizing of his proposals is what White himself considers the most extreme; namely Conrad's 'use of enigma as a way of artificially generating value' (p. 122). This fleetingly makes reference to an aspect of his work which demands further attention: the fact that those enigmas are invariably mediated by a member of a socially discrete group of professionals who determine precisely the parameters of the expressible, and, at the same time, confer value on the assumption of a studied distance. 'Amy Foster' displays all the markers of the Conradian enigma: 'the inscrutable mystery' of Amy's affections for the outsider; the 'fear of the Incomprehensible' which mars their relationship (Conrad, 1950b, pp. 109,108); all of which is textually bound within 'the frigid splendour of the sea, immense in the haze, as if enclosing all the earth with all the hearts lost among the passions of love and fear' (p. 138). The discursive limits are further set by a characteristic obliqueness of narrative style, whereby the 'I' of the narrator - an unidentified professional who is familiar with 'Admiralty charts' - introduces the second narrative voice, a country doctor who, in conversation with the first, becomes the storyteller. Although the story concerns the strange mutual attachment and isolation of two peasants, the narrative social and moral standpoint remains essentially extrinsic to their experience, despite Conrad's and Yanko's similar geographic origins. At the same time, the reader is led to believe that the 'penetrating power of [the doctor's] mind' can get to the heart of the enigmatic relationship:

> His intelligence is of a scientific order, of an investigating habit, and of that unappeasable curiosity which believes that there is a particle of a general truth in every mystery. (Ibid, p. 106)

Yet whatever that truth might be, it is never fully realized. The doctor's acuity is akin to Marlow's: it expresses the profundity of human experience only to confront the reader with its ultimate ineffability. Furthermore, these putative insights, although admitting to their own limitations, remain socially exclusive.[262] It is no surprise that Conrad figures largely in the Leavisite canon, since his works appear to offer a wider, more democratic

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[262] In the face of a general hostility towards Yanko, besides Amy, it is only the doctor who can appreciate his qualities: '"She and I alone in all the land, I fancy, could see his very real beauty."' (p. 133).

literary accessibility while the profounder (although unexpressed) truths remain locked within a still hierarchized social order.

Both *The Closed Harbour* and *Levine* radically undermine Conrad's implicit social positioning. Even though there is an ostensible similarity of approach in the proposition of an enigma, the motivations behind Hanley's socially aberrant acts - dereliction of duty in the former, murder in the latter - are not cloaked in any symbolist mystification, nor are they mediated through some socially specific voice, but are revealed in a polyphonic form of textual elucidation. Like its companion volume, *Levine*'s narrative method is multiple, but more complex, in that it also employs a more convoluted obliquity in the form of inner thoughts, diary entries, individual memories, and conversations, veering from a centrally focused subjectivity to various contingent ones, the principal of which in the later work is Hanley's version of Conrad's Amy, the social misfit, Grace. The enigma of the relationship between two ill-matched yet mutually dependent lovers is necessarily interrogated through a series of flashbacks since the opening chapter describes how Grace is brutally murdered by Levine. As in Hanley's earlier novel, no moral condemnation is evident, but, again, the question remains as to whether it is expressive of a late modernist despair in search of a consoling spirituality or is grounded in any social value.

Certainly, Hanley's representation of a relationship is more socially focused than that of Conrad, replacing a conflict of cultures - English versus central European - with that of class. Originally raised in Catholic Ireland, Grace is the daughter of a barrister, but has been socially displaced by the death of her parents in an air-raid. Just as Marius is gradually divested of the signifiers of a class identity, so Grace too becomes *déclassé* through her descent into a twilight world of provincial boarding houses in an unnamed West-of-England town. Here she is taken under the protective wing of the ambivalent figure of the landlady: a working-class gossip who is, nonetheless, through her benign interventions, representative of residual communal values. On the other hand, Mrs Gurner is a self-appointed guardian of Catholic morals who censures Grace's relationship with Levine:

> '... And the *lowness* of it. The way she just went off and lived with him in that awful hut, all amongst the scruff, her what was supposed to be a lady, sometimes that lot over-ripen to rottenness...' (Hanley, 1956, pp. 40-41)

Here, in contrast to Conrad's tendency to mystification, Hanley's late modernist text reveals itself as much more a contested arena in which existential freedoms - from sexual, communal, or religious strictures - conflict with surviving traditional forms of human association. Levine's position is ambivalent, maintaining a fondness for both a central European feudal society and the community of the sea, while rejoicing in an itinerant life without the conventional ties. Ironically, when he becomes rootless, the very place which provides a refuge and a reminder of former affinities - the Catholic church - harbours an undermining and disruptive force in the form of Grace. She, too, seeks a kind of refuge, yet her recent escape from a religiously reclusive parental household determines a fierce and unrestrained longing, a paradoxically destructive vitality which stifles and crushes Levine's habitual independence.

The post-mortem reflections on Grace's life by the fugitive Levine and the judgemental and intrusive readings of her diaries by, in turn, the police investigators, Mrs Gurner and Father Copley, cast an ironic light on Catholic morality and its efficacy in the modern world. Although the two fugitives from modernity both seek the security of the familiar place, Catholicism fails in any real sense to bring them back within its protective fold: in strict obedience to a censorious moral code the priest refuses them a Catholic marriage and they are evicted by Mrs Gurney. If Catholic morality stands accused of dereliction then the text searches for a radically alternative source of human solidarity or spiritual identity. To a certain extent that is recovered through a redeemed Mrs Gurney, who, despite her pretended piety, displays a genuine sense of charity towards the end. However, its most radical realization is discovered, self-referentially, within the space of Hanley's own medium; in narrative form itself. Levine, responding to Grace's childlike desire to hear a fairy-tale from his country - '... up to me, eagerly, like she's back in that place of hers that she said was full of trees, like she's sitting at her mother's knee' - tells her the story of an albatross, whose body is inhabited by the soul of a drowned sailor (Hanley, 1956, p. 205). In search of its former cousin - an old shipmate - it scours the ports of the world in the certain knowledge that somewhere 'he was bound to be walking

up home from the dock':

> '... But I don't know whether this fine old bird ever got to those places, because the last time I saw it it was still flying, on its way, on its long way, and it never stopped or dallied, sank or soared, never even turned its head, just went on and on searching for an old cousin named Thomas Hughes.' (p. 206)

Whereas, like Conrad's lovers, Levine and Grace remain fundamentally at odds, in such passages they come together on common ground through a collective memory of older social values. The fairy-tale represents a significant moment where a radically ancient form displaces the dominant narrative style, and Levine assumes the traditional figure of the storyteller, customarily the focal agent of communal cohesion. The irony is that as the novel moves towards closure, Levine relies more and more on his skill as a storyteller to create a false optimism about the future. In order to placate Grace's persistent desire to escape, a fictitious sailor is invented called Wladek, who will provide for them a passage to America. As Levine remembers, 'the fairy-tales got bigger and bigger '(p. 241) and the daily expectation of a potential saviour creates a mutual euphoria:

> A kind of happiness was in the hut. You felt it, but couldn't see what it was, you imagined it. I imagined it. The machinery of happiness shining like silver, a wheel beginning to move. That's how real Wladek was. I believed in him; I even went out to look for him. She'd be at the door, listening for my feet at the gravel, her hand on the door, her mouth half open. (p. 245)

Thus the innocence and social value of the tale is corrupted and Levine descends into a realm of narrative confusion in which reality and fantasy become blurred. It is significant that Levine finally weaves that fantasy out of a dream of collective restoration in the community of the sea, which at the same time recovers some of its spiritual connotations. Effectively, both novels represent a watershed in Hanley's sea writing: since he can no longer return to the sea in either a fictive or a real sense: it remains for him, as it was for Melville, constantly out of reach, unattainable, an absent presence. While mariners continue to make appearances in Hanley's texts, they are landlocked, fish out of water, consistently cast in the rôle of the intruder, condemned as outsiders. If the sea remains undefiled, memorialized in its natural sublimity, sailors are symbolic of an increasingly

obtrusive crisis and despair. Hanley's radical challenge to the high modernism of Conrad, while initially grounded in a social form which refuses the conventional distancing, reveals his own medium to be Janus-faced: always in search of radical ways to unify, to remake essential connections, though inevitably given to expressions of social atomization.

The Furys: End or Beginning

If the community of the sea exists only in memory, what can re-create that sense of connection, or of an integrated social self? The first tentative area of exploration is Ireland. While Hanley's two final novels of the sea were representative of a global approach to a general sense of crisis, the inevitable textual recourse to his homeland signifies a more sharply nationalist focus on the importance of tradition and the place of community in the desire for resolution. National identity is central to the discourse of exile and to developments in late modernism, in which a variety of post-war writers - notably Irish and Welsh - struggle to come to terms with the imperatives of a cultural inheritance. A primary motivating force of modernism was its radical anti-colonialist challenge - particularly from Joyce - to the dominant English literary forms. In post-war Britain and elsewhere that struggle is continued among Irish exiles, including Hanley, who participate in a heterogeneous late modernism determined by a complexity of ideological forms, dominant among which are, on the one hand, those dictated by a feeling that traditional kinds of social relation are defunct or irrecoverable (Beckett here is the most extreme); or, on the other, by a conviction that they are still viable but only in an historically and locally residual sense and in some ideal exemplary form (as in the stories of Frank O'Connor or Sean O'Faolain). Writing his two final Furys novels respectively at the beginning and the end of the 1950s, Hanley shares with other veteran cultural exiles from a pre-war generation a common pre-occupation with place, community and the re-making of identity.

Frank O'Connor, although an almost exact contemporary, has little in common with Hanley. Like his fellow exile, Sean O'Faolain, he was an IRA activist in the Civil War and his stories initially emerged from the turmoil of its political upheavals. Here is rehearsed the continual encounter between a traditional Catholic culture and the coming of modernity, a narrative process whereby the older order is subtly and irrevocably

changed. In the story, 'Guests of the Nation' (1931) from which Behan's *The Hostage* later takes its cue, an imperative of modern warfare in the form of an IRA execution determines a moral withdrawal from what seems a fundamental human solidarity, while in another from the same year 'The Procession of Life' a youth's propulsion out into the night world of Cork represents the beginning of a necessary change from a sheltered life. O'Connor's work is replete with these 'epiphanal' moments in which the world beyond intrudes and radically undermines the old Catholic certainties. Consequently there are expressions of both profound regret - 'and anything that happened to me afterwards I never felt the same about again' - or joyous liberation: 'once these foreign notions have found their way into your mind, it is impossible ever to expel them entirely afterwards'.[263]

Later works develop that tension inherent in the clash between the outside 'modern' world of mutability - almost always England - and the indigenous static society of traditional Ireland. Similarly Hanley's final two Furys novels explore the ways in which the urban metropolitan world impinges upon the experience of the exile and how this has implications for an eventual return. *Winter Song* is, as its title implies, a novel of old age, in which Denny and Fanny Fury prepare for their final journey to a country where the possibility of redemption from the post-lapsarian world of the industrial 'mainland' still exists. The first part of the novel chronicles Denny's dramatic return from the dead, after having survived the torpedoing of his ship, yet he returns to an essentially moribund Gelton.[264] There is nothing here of its former vibrancy or bustle, it is essentially a dead world, populated by ghosts. Here Fanny, believing him lost at sea, has, by a special dispensation from the nuns, retired to a Catholic hospice for the dying where

> She has heard the sound of wheels grinding on the gravel path, she has seen the gentleman in black. Beyond the door she has heard the whispering, the occasional moan, the grace of life departing. (Hanley, 1950c, p. 43)

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[263] Respectively the end of 'Guests of the Nation' and 'The Custom of the Country'(1947) in O'Connor, 1990, pp. 150, 215.

[264] See Chapter 6, p. 79 for a discussion of Denny's ordeal in *Our Time is Gone*.

Fanny herself is not physically ill, yet her dwelling, as it were, among the virtually dead and what her eldest son Desmond calls 'these black crows',[265] suggests that her current existence is at least purgatorial if not actually terminal (Ibid, p. 54). Denny, too, although re-united with Fanny, still inhabits that limbo zone between surrender to an inevitable decline and the possibility of restoration. Here, the sea assumes an ambivalent signification, both a refuge and the site of a watery demise. Denny, confined to bed and hovering between waking and dreaming, gives cause for alarm when he warns the vigilant Fanny that 'you've got a husband who can slip away into the sea any time he wishes' (Ibid, p. 145).

If any of Hanley's contemporaries are evoked by such images, then it is surely Samuel Beckett. Although Hanley lacks Beckett's cynical irony, his old couple are reminiscent of Mr and Mrs Rooney in the latter's own textual return to Ireland, the radio play *All That Fall*, a short journey in both subjective and collective memory to some semi-rural pre-war past. Here, however, is no spatial or temporal division between different qualities of social existence. His Ireland of provincial sterility conveys a feeling of universal entropy:

> Mrs Rooney: It is suicide to be abroad. But what is it to be at home, Mr Tyler, what is it to be at home? **A lingering dissolution**. Now we are white with dust from head to foot... (Beckett, 1957, p. 10, emphasis added)

The general state of morbidity is inherent not only in a figural language, but in the characters themselves, most of whom are in some way symbolically disabled. Mrs Rooney; fat, rheumatic and childless, shuffles her way to the station to meet her blind

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[265] A reference to the black of the nuns' habits. It is significant that at least four of Hanley's novels in this period disclose an ambivalent relationship with Catholicism and its possible relevance in contemporary society. Its insistent presence, whether due to a latent nostalgia for its symbolic communal function or for some desire for a spiritual dimension in his work, is almost always problematical. While there is a degree of sympathy for its 'simple' adherents - the humble Labiche, the charitable Mrs Gurney - there are, equally, reservations concerning the efficacy of its priesthood. In the absence of any sense of its social or spiritual centrality, it provides merely a residual or compensatory refuge: the hospice, the retreat, the convent.

husband, and continually evokes by her inquiries the decrepit state of her fellow villagers, most of whom either disclose some personal or family illness, or signify - like Miss Fitt, who is 'not really there at all' - some idea of incorporeality (Ibid, p. 19). Mr Rooney's observation, therefore, that his wife is 'struggling with a dead language' (p. 32) is centrally emblematic since death is suggested not so much in an outmoded usage as in the metaphoric significance of the utterances themselves: both a dead language and a language of the dead. Most expressive of all is the frequency of tropes suggestive of falling or descent - as a result of some unnamed transgression - from a state of grace into madness, decay and death. The 'off-stage' death of a child who 'falls' from a train, is the final condemnation of a post-lapsarian world carelessly indifferent toward its future.

Like the Rooneys, Mr and Mrs Fury have had a lifetime of endlessly futile journeys, a state of existence to which they are seemingly condemned, calling into question the viability of that final voyage. The first of such journeys in *Winter Song* is Fanny's tramride to the pier head to secure Denny's compensation. The re-creation of an habitual routine when she would draw her husband's pay is the beginning of a regained vitality:

> After the long silence, the loneliness, this vivid panorama, this continuous movement, wakened something in her. She wanted to go down to mingle with the crowds, to move with them, to be lost in them. That had been her life, those twice weekly journeys into the heart of the city. (Hanley, 1950c, p. 173)

Yet Fanny cannot re-invoke 'old times': the elderly can claim no inalienable rights nor have any place in a forbidding city which contains only residual pockets of immutability. For her it is a place which only the young can inherit, which otherwise is dominated by 'great patches of emptiness' (p. 197). The most forlorn journey is the one they both take to the prison, -'that place, towering up on a rock' - where their son still serves his sentence for murder. Again the primary image is of alienation as they take the tram to the station, where, 'waiting for the Darnton train, they stood outside life [...] had slipped out into a world, bewildering, strange...' (pp. 239-240). As the train nears the 'Arctic' remoteness of the prison, the increasingly enfeebled Denny becomes more and more disturbed by a jovial yet sinister fellow passenger, who happens to be one of the prison hangmen. Although Fanny bravely urges Denny to one last endeavour, he is clearly

unnerved by the 'never to be subdued' whistling of the symbolic figure and their journey is finally abandoned when he has to admit to a failure of strength.

While Hanley's elderly couple share some of the pathos of Beckett's characters, they nevertheless draw on resources of inner strength which a Beckettian aesthetic ideology refuses to consider, namely those of national identity and class. Central to Hanley's textual imagery is Denny's livid scar which he proudly bears across the back of his head and down his neck. It is testimony to a seafaring tradition of altruism and self-sacrifice and vivid emblem of his long ordeal in the sea when, fatigued almost beyond endurance, he courageously yet unsuccessfully attempted to rescue a ship's boy. Furthermore, what continues to sustain the Furys, despite the disappointments and setbacks, is that vision of the distant land and the promise of arrival. In this latter sense Hanley's world is much closer to that of Frank O'Connor. In a post-war climate of increasing social atomization, a reversion to traditional Irish values restores that sense of cohesion which the modern world order has dissipated. In O'Connor's later stories from the late 1950s, a recognition of the failure of absolutist values is tinged with regret for the world that went with them, so that older social allegiances to the land itself achieve a primacy independent of any moral or social convention. In such a context even the priesthood has no necessary claim to ethical ascendancy, but must be subject to a more ancient authority: in 'Lost Fatherlands' a rule-worshipping monastery refuses to accommodate a recidivist member who is taken in by a local publican, himself a returned exile with an empathetic sensitivity toward the plight of the outsider, whereas in 'The Mass Island' priesthood and ancient rural customs are at one: the funeral of a country priest becomes focally symbolic for a spontaneous expression of collective memory and vitality. Both stories are concerned with the notions of exile and return and with traditional social relations as a source of fundamental value in a world in which they have been superseded.[266]

It is in this latter sense that *Winter Song* finally discloses its affinity with O'Connor's world rather than with Beckett's. Submerged beneath Hanley's bleak industrial vision of fragmentation and disintegration are those values rooted in his idealized childhood which

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[266] See O'Connor, 1990, pp 112-122 and pp 123-134.

surface in remnant narratives of an untroubled past and in those characters who still aspire to its associated Christian virtues. Fanny and Denny's final attainment of the Irish shore represents that sense of deeper and more enduring value: the simpler life of pre-industrial Ireland, before the family's descent into the fallen world of migrant labour. What is finally achieved is the partial realization of her dream; the imagined restoration of both family and landscape:

> She was standing in a big white house, in a green country, that stood on the lip of the shore. And in all the rooms were voices, and into them streamed sun. From some rooms singing, from some laughter. There she stood at the bottom of the big staircase, and calling upon them to come down - and she named them one after the other, as they had come to her in bygone hours, sometimes in the half darkness of a winter's night and sometimes in the soft velvety light of a summer morning [...] and looking out through a window upon the vast expanse of sea, soundless, spun to silence, and carrying over its surface the soft shimmer of the summer sun, and one to another she watched, and she knew they were altogether, close, heart to heart and she was happy. (Hanley, 1950c, pp. 255,256)

Although there are the occasional dissenting tones from the anti-Catholic Desmond, *Winter Song* largely reduces the customary narrative contestation, familiar from previous Hanley novels, to a monologic quietism. Such a desire for familial restoration is understandable when the extent of conflict and breakdown in Hanley's own family is known. Despite his consistent warning against any biographical reading of his work, it was certainly the case that his parents became estranged after their final departure from Liverpool.[267] Nevertheless, if the world of the aged in *Winter Song* represents a novelistic wish-fulfilment or symbolic resolution, then *An End And A Beginning* is much more sceptical of the possibility of that project and resumes a radical uncertainty of authorial position. The narrative follows Peter Fury's wanderings after his release from prison. As with Denny's return soon after the end of the First War, this later urban world of 1920s Gelton is alienating and oppressive, a wasteland of steamy tea-rooms, dingy boarding houses and poverty.

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[267] See Chapter 13, p. 249, note 253: at the time of his father's death in Deptford, his mother and sister Mary were living in Forest Hill. Again, I am indebted to Liam Hanley for this information.

Again, Ireland offers an escape and a refuge, yet it is an entirely different domain to that envisaged in *Winter Song* and much closer to Beckett's entropic world. Peter discovers it to be an 'accursed bloody country', which has caused the death of his parents - both killed in an act of Republican terrorism - and witnessed the decay into senility of his Aunt Brigid. His eventual destination is Rath Na or Ram's Gate, the abandoned estate of the Downey family which Desmond had visited in *Our Time is Gone*. The house is still kept by the old retainer, Miss Fetch, who, besides Peter, is expecting the imminent arrival of his former lover, Sheila Fury. In this narrative conjunction of three discrete figures, Ireland is ambivalently represented both as the location of a recoverable past and as the derelict land of the present, abandoned by its former guardians to the 'petrol of the bright and murderous boyos' (p. 127). The reference is, of course, to the recent War of Independence during which many Anglo-Irish country houses were burnt to the ground. Rath Na is one of the survivors, yet there appears to be no family commitment to a continuity of residence. Such a situation was not unprecedented. In fact, as Elizabeth Bowen has testified in her own personal family history, absentee landlordism was a common feature of Irish colonial history.[268] Hanley himself was acquainted with the work of 'Lizzie Bowen' and his Rath Na bears some resemblance to her Bowens Court, the history of which she first published in 1942.[269] Like Hanley's later Furys novels Bowen's book is concerned with how, despite a contemporary condition of catastrophe or decline, the past might provide some sense of permanence. Bowen does not flinch from the admission that her ancestors were colonial intruders and land-grabbers, yet her history, from the Cromwellian conquests and suppressions to the present, seeks continually to justify the benevolent presence of the Anglo-Irish, whose stewardship of the land produced 'a lively and simple spontaneous human affection between the landed families and the Irish people around them' (Bowen, 1984, p. 126).

Hanley's Miss Fetch is just such a representative of Irish peasant stock who still retains memories of a once vibrant country house regime:

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[268] See Bowen, 1984, pp. 160, 403.

[269] He once described Elizabeth Berridge's Hour-Glass Library book of short stories as containing two which 'Lizzie Bowen would have been glad to have written' (Hanley/ Berridge, 6 12 56).

> "... Once upon a time this place was one of the most beautiful in the whole country, and it had the sea's breath on it, and every balmy air, and all the lovely soft lights played about in its rooms..." (Hanley, 1958a, p. 109)

Yet there is a degree of social ambivalence in the internal narrative recalling her sexual initiation into Rath Na servitude by the brutal Patrick Downey:

> "... He pressed hard upon me and the words came out of his whisky mouth, and he told me that girls should part their legs before they parted their lips, and he parted mine by an unnatural strength, and I was full of my own hanging horror then, and might have been the first bitch in this part of the country that I rarely look at now with the same eyes..." (Ibid, p. 208)

Downey's urbanized and disaffected daughter Sheila would appear to support the sense of disillusionment. She has no nostalgia for aristocratic Ireland and its perpetual, circumscribed social round - 'a well of idleness, a sink of inertia' - and is much more enthusiastic for what she has left behind: 'that incessant roar, the continuous hammering and blasting, the ocean of energy, the mountain of labour' of working-class Gelton (Ibid p. 254). There is a reminder here, again, of O'Connor's frequent narrative encounters with the wider urban environment, in which his characters realize some unexpected yet unfulfilled potential. In O'Connor the emphasis is more often cultural, as in his story, 'The Custom of the Country' in which a young Irish woman repudiates her family heritage as a Henebry-Hayes and prefers to be 'a woman of no class' (O'Connor, 1990, p. 215). Hanley's concern is much more class specific. Sheila's encounter is with a wholly different urban world driven by the frantic activity of capitalist production and transportation, whose 'swarms seemed to give the whole thing a warmth, a something glowing and feverish' (Hanley, 1958a, p. 254). The metaphors of productivity are significant in that the dark yet fecund regions of the city are contrasted favourably with the sterility of the provincial backwater: the 'feel of ice' and the pallid look of the Rath Na interior,[270] a place of unachieved fruition, where its surviving women - the sexually active Sheila and the victimized 'Miss' Fetch - are without issue. Yet Sheila, too, is much

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[270] See particularly Hanley, 1958a, pp. 104-106 in which Miss Fetch goes about the house opening up the deserted rooms.

concerned with her roots and as both she and Peter wander through the countryside something about the land itself - 'the feel of the country, her own indestructible home' rekindles a desire for settlement (Ibid, p. 195).

Peter's interior lament of the dispossessed soul adds fuel to the expectation that the land, irrespective of the social superstructure it sustains, might provide some form of resolution, such is the strength of his 'ach[ing] to belong, to have something to hold'. His journey to Ireland is in order 'to get back a *feeling*, a sense of being home, of being somewhere that held the warmth he had known all those years ago' (Ibid, p. 95). Yet he shares with Sheila a sense of the reality behind the idyll, of 'the dead land' masked by its apparent beauty:

> Ireland was out, he knew it from the beginning. Cactus land sign-posted with old men. The land of winter where the child was hated. Love under the ice, the bent bones crawling to the hearth, embracing only their own... (Ibid, p. 176)

Nonetheless there still exists a residual hope in some form of racial revival through the metaphoric sexual re-union of the two protagonists. If the present social sterility has resulted from a failure of human association in either class - the dynastic decline of both the diasporic Furys and the absent though residually ascendent Downeys - then the future, surely, is guaranteed by a union of what is best in the younger generations. However, despite the narrative movement towards a crucial and pivotal sexual encounter, no social or relational transformation is achieved. Although Peter achieves a sense of momentary elation, the language of the post-coital scene is strongly suggestive of spiritual desolation:

> The woman's eyes are partly open, as though peeping, a drawn-up arm might be protecting the breast it covers, the limbs of both seem piled, twisted under their twisted sheets, unnatural, ugly in their gesture. The bed sags. A candle has fallen into the open hearth. The fire is out. (Ibid, p. 224)

A similar structure of feeling pervades two contemporary plays of Beckett's which also reveal strong Irish connections. In *Krapp's Last Tape* the lone figure of Krapp, languishes in a dilapidated den, playing through old taped memos to himself. His pre-occupation with the recorded past is closely related to that of Henry in the later radio play *Embers*

whose narrative or dramatic method re-invokes 'old times' through the intermittent sound of sea and shingle. Each character is similarly obsessed by his own voice which ambivalently expresses both regret and defiance in reaction to recurring memories - particularly of a memorable sexual encounter. As in Hanley's sexual narrative, the central concern is with a sterile present, yet in Beckett, it is a state which, paradoxically and self-referentially, is willed, not regretted. The most significant figurative moments in Beckett are those which refuse the consolations of cherished memory and perpetually re-invoke the consequent pain. Krapp's 'epiphanal' realization of 'the fire in me now' is completely antithetical to Hanley's symbolic dying fire: a perpetually invoked pain is preferable to any regrets about the past (Beckett, 1959, p. 19). Similarly, Henry's reiterated image of the two old men - the one a doctor who can bring hypodermic relief, the other the patient who refuses the drug - is Beckett's ultimate proposition that in a post-holocaust world it is only in the extremes of pain that anything truly human can be expressed (Ibid, pp. 35,36).

Hanley's texts, likewise, have a propensity for invoking pain, but at the same time seek some form of human redemption. Characteristically his narrative shift is inevitably from the sexual to the social. Sheila's primary motivations being, in any case, territorial, there is soon revealed beneath the conciliatory and democratic surface a previously undisclosed imperiousness, confirming a relational structure which is close to another of Beckett's works, namely *Endgame*. Hanley's text here begins to assume a more socially specific version of a play where the world is reduced to a purely abstract distribution of power relations. As with Beckett's Hamm, Sheila comes to dominate the vapid space of a formerly viable social system. All that is left is a series of tussles between the various remnants of its past, both Miss Fetch and Peter being subordinated within what resembles a suspiciously feudal set of social relations. Paradoxically, Sheila's bid for a new stewardship leaves her isolated and the matriarch of a potentially empty domain, yet the narrative does not end here on a note of conventionally modernist irresolution. The prospect of such a future propels the former lovers on their separate ways back out into an uncertain world, leaving Rath Na once more in the hands of Miss Fetch. It is at this point that the novel finally refuses or turns its back on what might have been a significant confrontation with history. Sheila and Peter are ultimately beyond the pale because their

natures are equally conflictual and combative: neither can survive in the cloistered quietude of a provincial dead end. Peter escapes to the port only to embark emblematically on a 'German tramp... shut[ting] his eyes to what was already rising to confront him' (Ibid, p. 311), while Sheila, it is suggested (though not made explicit), returns to Desmond's life of struggle for political domination, similarly covering her face in an attitude of diffident resignation, 'shut[ting] out the world that was near and the world that was far away' (Ibid, p. 307).

The image is uncannily reminiscent of Beckett's Hamm, who ends the play, in a similar attitude, submerged beneath his 'old stancher' (Beckett, 1968, pp. 52-3) and, paradoxically, this is also the sense in which, though they are ostensibly polar opposites, Beckett and Hanley are ideologically linked. If Peter and Sheila articulate simultaneously both the necessity and the reluctance to confront modernity, then the text finally offers a way beyond the impasse. The first intimation of a possible textual resolution comes roughly midway into the novel in a recurring post-war Hanleyan trope: the distant view of a lone figure working the land.[271] In this case Peter encounters a monk tilling the soil and is suddenly envious of the monastic life of his original calling. The longing for Tolstoyan simplicity links with the final fate of Rath Na, which has been leased to a community of nuns, with Miss Fetch as its sole lay incumbent. Beckett never attempts anything like a resolution, yet Hanley's priestly regime of simple piety inhabits an identical cultural space to that of Beckett's empty enclosure: outside the realm of history and beyond the social reality of contemporary Ireland. What Hanley here proposes is a source of spiritual value like that which Elizabeth Bowen discovered in the 'timelessness' of Bowens Court, yet as both Beckett's work and the fate of Bowen's Court attest, such social affinities with the past are not sustainable. Nonetheless, it is to the traditional past which Hanley still resorted in his search for a viable social identity and that was both physically and textually in rural Wales.

[271] See also the short story 'The Sower' discussed in Chapter 15, p. 281 below.

CHAPTER 15. WALES VERSUS LONDON: METROPOLITAN AND PROVINCIAL PERSPECTIVES.

Wales: The Imagined Community

As Hanley became more settled in his rural fastness of Montgomeryshire, it seemed that he was attempting to live out his ideal of the artistic life: namely that the ideal position of the writer is located on the social 'fringes'. Yet, in order to continue to exist economically as a writer, it was necessary for him to maintain those vital connections both with the local community and with the institutional and professional centres of contemporary literary culture. His new social 'involvement' as an artist was not so much directly in any lived communal experience - although he was to make such claims - but, as it were, at one remove in the more abstracted realm of a broadcasting culture. The opportunity for new artistic productivity was afforded by the post-war re-organisation of the radio network into three national - the Home, the Light, the Third - and six 'regional' services. For Hanley, this cultural division provided two contrasting areas of reception for his work which were reflecting his own contradictory constitution as an artist: the diverse cultural environments of the provinces - the Northern and Welsh regions in particular - and the metropolitan centre of London. In Britain, the inauguration of the Third Programme in 1946 dedicated to a 'Mandarin'[272] pursuit of high 'excellence' and experimentation in the arts was further evidence of a newly constituted or late modernist culture, while on the other hand a simultaneous commitment to regionalism and populism signalled a post-war democratic determination to make audible 'the voice of the people'.

Such a system emerged from a wartime internal struggle between the metropolitan cultural centralists such as William Haley - the Director-General and champion of The Third - and those committed to a more 'democratic' post-war society like John Coatman, the Northern Region Director, who advocated that the 'best broadcasting is that which is

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[272] The word is Cyril Connolly's from his 1938 book of literary memoirs, *Enemies of Promise*. The term 'Mandarin' is coined for those forms of high culture (neo-romanticism, high modernism) which were constantly re-asserting themselves in the face of 'realist' or 'vernacular' challenges. See again Robert Hewison's *In Anger*, which describes the early 1950s post-War culture as dominated by 'aristocratic' or 'Mandarin values' (Hewison, 1981, p. 64).

most in touch with the life of the people ... at all points' (quoted in Briggs, 1979, p. 94). Eventually, the regionalist strategy prevailed, by which time - July 1945 - Haley was arguing publicly that broadcasting was an ideal medium to foster a productive 'rivalry' between national and local cultures, 'which are an enduring part of our heritage' (Ibid, p. 95). The conflict between regionalism and centralization contained the seeds of a later more developed debate between an entrenched cultural conservatism - whose major advocates were Evelyn Waugh and T S Eliot - and those emergent New Left cultural theorists like Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall and Richard Hoggart, who were arguing for more socially extended cultural definitions.[273] Although not directly involved in those debates, Hanley's own career was subsequently characterized by that same prevailing cultural dichotomy.

He began to submit manuscripts to the BBC soon after the War, with a declared preference for the Regions,[274] impelled as always by economic hardship. Although very often favourably received, his novels never sold enough for him to make a living:[275] short stories already published could be offered for adaptation, while new short dramatic pieces and excerpts from work in progress could be produced relatively easily for quick

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[273] Williams has stated that Eliot's *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948) was the initial impetus for his major work *Culture and Society* (1958), the motivation for which was always 'oppositional', refuting 'the increasing contemporary use of the concept of culture against democracy, socialism, the working class or popular education in terms of the tradition itself' (Williams, 1979, pp. 97-98).

[274] In 1957 Hanley wrote to Bertram Parnaby of BBC North:

> I must say that as far as I am concerned London is out. I prefer the Regions, and always submit to them. I hope the day will come when they will finally be their own absolute masters, and not under the control of London. Indeed I think London could learn some valuable lessons from the Regions. (Hanley/Parnaby, 3 12 57)

[275] Thus Hanley's creation of the pseudonym Patric Shone. Although he continued to write narrative fiction, Hanley's artistic development was gradually away from the form in the direction of, mostly, broadcast drama, until he temporarily abandoned the novel form in 1962. This was confirmation that Hanley's narrative approach had always tended toward the production of dialogue - both outer and inner - and it was significant that during the previous decade *Sailor's Song*, *The Welsh Sonata*, *Levine*, *The Ocean* and a serialized *The Furys* had all proved eminently adaptable for radio.

reward. The BBC archive discloses a great volume of ideas, titles and suggestions: short stories, plays, 'features', as well as adaptations of earlier works - which he produced prolifically from 1947 up to the time he resumed novel writing at the beginning of the 1970s. Many appeared fleetingly and tantalizingly only to be rejected and never heard of again, yet Hanley seems to have had a string of admirers and supporters at the BBC - both regionally and centrally - who continued to urge him to re-submit. As a result, he began to make a successful career out of script-writing and acquired, in the field of broadcasting and the dramatic arts, a number of devoted friends, several of whom adapted his novels and stories.

The material necessity also had artistic implications for the direction of his work and career. The habit of script production was conducive to an increasing dialogic tendency in Hanley's works which demanded a greater economy and intensity of means. The result was a fine-tuning of the dialogue in his novels, but also a development of that quality in Hanley's writing which had always been there - the representation of inner speech. Thus a greater potential was realized in the sounds of words, the patterns and rhythms of speech which had earlier been experimented with in, for instance, *Sailor's Song*. As already argued in the example of Samuel Beckett, radio could powerfully convey through sound the clarity of subjective memory: in *All That Fall* and *Embers* the creaking mechanisms of an older Irish social order collapse into a desperate and alienated privatized discourse; whereas with Dylan Thomas in *Under Milk Wood* on the other hand, it was the medium which could produce a sometimes fantasized, but nonetheless vibrant sense of communal life. Hanley was also much concerned with memory and the past and what he subsequently produced occupied a discursive space somewhere in the middle, veering between a bleak, pessimistic Beckettian subjectivity and a Thomas-inspired, public poetical style. Although ostensibly divergent, both approaches are consistent with Hanley's position as an exile where the symbolic realms of Ireland, the sea and now Wales become signifiers of a struggle between Hanley's affiliation to a collective orientation within a more socially extensive national culture and a defensive withdrawal into the embattled enclaves of a more rarefied cultural tradition.

Hanley's first textual exploration of his adopted country had been undertaken before the

war, in a few stories which revealed for the first time an unaccustomed inclination toward a pastoral aesthetic. In 'The Sower', for instance, he leaves behind the world of the industrial working class in favour of what he identified as a still extant Welsh peasantry:

> One could imagine he experienced a sort of ecstasy as he trod the firm earth beneath his feet, that as he flung this corn towards it he was in essence symbolising his faith in the soil, his duty towards the mother earth. [...] It was as though some intoxicating essence rose from the earth itself.[...] Here was the core of movement, movement made rhythmical, made poetic. (Hanley, 25 10 35, p. 662)[276]

During the War and in its aftermath Hanley occasionally returned to that minor aspect of his aesthetic,[277] but he did not begin to develop it more fully until the Hanleys were firmly settled in the home they had found just outside the village in 1948. Its Welsh name was Ffridd Cottage but Hanley habitually headed his correspondence simply 'The Cottage'. During 1951 two pieces appeared in *The New Statesman* which signalled a more poetical Hanley who appeared to have taken root in Welsh soil. These were part of a work in progress which was eventually published as 'Anatomy of Llangyllwch' in *Don Quixote Drowned*, an anthology of reminiscences and contemporary observations which ingeniously combined the core of his life work - his abiding attachment to the sea - and his new preoccupation with the Welsh countryside.

What is here discovered is that, despite his recent articulations of crisis,[278] Hanley still retains the capacity to project an ideal, which he originally found in the sea's sublimity. The means of continually evoking that structure of feeling is enabled by the view from

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[276] See in addition 'The Butterfly' and 'The Lamb' which also first appeared in *The Spectator* in April and June of 1936; both stories juxtaposing the 'natural' order of the countryside - 'the strange life that abounded in hedges and ditches' - with the 'unnatural' impositions of socialization and modernity - in the latter case a 'charabanc' whose 'garish colours of red and green [fling] a defiant ultimatum at Nature's quieter tones...' (collected in Hanley, 1938a, pp, 146, 219).

[277] See, for instance two short nationalistic pieces, the essay 'The Spirit of Wales', Apr 1942, pp. 21-23 and the story 'Welsh Bus Ride', 1 5 43, p. 358.

[278] That is since 1950, *A Walk in the Wilderness*, *The House in the Valley* (1951), and *The Closed Harbour* (1952).

his cottage window toward the mountains of Montgomeryshire:

> Llangyllwch is an island surrounded by mountains...
> Fawning somewhere below, a modest hill or two, one of which I like very much. I call it The Wave. I often look at it through my window, and it does at times seem to me to hold within it the very momentum of a living wave. Nor have I ever ceased to imagine that beyond it there may lie an unknown sea. Sometimes I have expected it to come crashing down, sending spray flying. But in the clear morning light it looks just a hard grey granite mass, sparsely covered with vegetation, solid and unyielding, yet, too it seems to shoulder a wave in some far-off ocean. (Hanley, 1953, p. 101)

The opening sentences of 'Anatomy of Llangyllwch' make a significant connection between the sea and the Welsh upland environment, transforming an observed landscape and the sea of a preserved memory into a synthesized version of the pastoral vision. As Hanley goes on to admit, 'it is a beautiful illusion and I do not wish to break it' (Ibid, p. 105). The form is very different to any previous work. Written in the first person, it combines a style of poetical evocation with that of 'conversational exchanges' resembling the BBC feature, a hybrid form itself constructed out of collated 'documentary' material and imaginative 'scripting'.[279] Here Hanley represents himself as an integral part of village social life, in an apparently authentic 'documentary' account of his daily encounters with the rural Welsh. Llangyllwch is, of course, Llanfechain the place of his spiritual homecoming, the community into which, according to the author, he had been

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[279] A selection from the work was eventually broadcast on BBC Wales as 'The Llangyllwch Chronicle' on 22 March 1955. Most of Hanley's work was initially submitted to the regional Features or Talks Departments but he was soon to win powerful allies such as Dorothy Baker, Donald MacWhinnie and P H (Howard) Newby who were talks producers for The Third Programme.

Figure 10: The Cottage, Llanfechain, photographed in 1992.

Figure 11: The surrounding countryside from the Cottage.

welcomed unconditionally:

> I have lived with the Welsh for twenty years. Now I would not live with any body else. I like them. I like them because they are courteous and cunning, eccentric, provincial, artistic, insular, poetic, dramatic, fierce and sometimes mad. They are in fact a lit-up people...
> I think the genius of the Welsh lies in the ability with which they dramatize themselves and their everyday lives. These people of the mountains have the gift of seeing a certain nightmarish quality in things. In this land, nobody is odd who gives himself to imaginative expression; he is not looked on as different, he is just one of them.[280] (Ibid, p. 114)

However, Hanley's identification with 'the people of the mountains' is highly selective. Llanfechain itself, as already witnessed, was much more heterogeneous. Effectively, his account democratically reduces a highly complex local hierarchy to a community of social equals, to a simple, traditional society of peasants and eccentrics. It ignores the dominant presence of the local Anglo-Welsh, the remnants of a declining land-owning class[281] and it refuses the topographical and social identity of Llanfechain as a 'Welsh border town'. Such a reality is much more faithfully represented in a work contemporaneous with Hanley's, the novel *Upon Several Occasions* by his friend and former fellow-villager Elizabeth Berridge.[282] Her fictional 'Bryntanat' is a community divided on grounds of religion between the Anglo-Welsh parishioners of the Church of England and the indigenous Welsh non-conformists of the chapel. The local head of the former, the Rev. Peters desires an end to the 'narrow nationalism' of the indigenous Welsh yet envies 'with

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[280] I am indebted to my colleague Nick Worrall for pointing out Hanley's Freudian slip in the use of the phrase 'one of them', thus excluding himself from the group of which he claims to be a part.

[281] Thinly disguised in his earlier novel, *The House in the Valley* (see above Chapter I3, pp. 245-250).

[282] Elizabeth Berridge and Reginald Moore had not found it economically viable to continue to live in Llanfechain and returned to Regent's Park, London in 1950 when Moore secured a job as an editorial assistant with John Baker's new publishing firm, Phoenix House (Berridge, 1996). Hanley was briefly with the latter during 1950-51, when they published respectively *Winter Song* and *A Walk in the Wilderness* and also planned some Hanley reprints, of which only one, a 'revised' edition of *Our Time is Gone*, was published (Gibbs, 1980, pp. 75, 104-107).

all his soul' the undiluted pagan passion of Mr Merrion, the local Methodist Minister the representative of a people who, the former says '"...respond to the savage heart of the Mabinogion, flaming hells of the spirit..."' (Berridge, 1953, pp. 145, 81, 207). Although the narrative perspective of the novel crosses and recrosses the dividing line between the two communities, it is the rôle of the Rev. Peters which becomes central when, re-discovering some of that passion from his maternal blood-line, he challenges the complacency of the nationalist divisions. He and his wife are, with their greater sensitivity to local Welsh customs and practices, the instigators of communal harmony, which is achieved, not through any Welsh initiative, but through the crucial social centrality of the English vicarage.

In Hanley's village, there is no parish church, there are no vicars, landowners or women's institutes, only an 'imagined community' of chapel, farmers, shopkeepers and simple peasants, refracted through the privileged category of Welsh 'nationality': a contrary identity to that discovered in Hanley's descriptions of the people of South Wales where, apart from the necessary use of Welsh as a geographic term, there is a studied avoidance of the specific qualities of their nationality. Here, however, he deploys a whole series of extraordinary epithets which putatively constitute the idea of Welshness, conjured out of the writer's sense of their literary value and a poetics of nationalism. Every character, in order to qualify for inclusion in this definition of the specifically Welsh, must of necessity display one or other of these exceptional qualities: behavioral characteristics which are, above all, beyond the ordinary. Hanley is particularly enraptured by the creative and imaginative system of naming, which refers to occupations or character traits: 'Humphrey Accident', the ambulance driver; 'Jones Independent', the reclusive hill-farmer, or the remarkable, 'Cadwalader Back-to-Front Odd-Job', the chapel caretaker, so called because he is supposed to have buried someone 'upside down' (Hanley, 1953, p. 139).

The lyrical concentration on names is, of course, familiar from Dylan Thomas (Dai Bread, Willy-Nilly Postman). Although *Under Milk Wood* was not broadcast until January 1954, Thomas's voice and poetical style had been heard on radio since wartime and

published in journals since the 1930s.[283] It is perhaps, then, not such a remarkable coincidence that the penultimate chapter of Hanley's 'Anatomy' surveys the Llangyllwch community at evening in precisely the same way as Thomas's First Voice presents Llaregyb at breakfast:

> FIRST VOICE: Mary Ann Sailors
> M A SAILORS: praises the Lord who made porridge..
> FIRST VOICE: Mr Pugh
> MR PUGH: remembers ground glass as he juggles his omelet.
> FIRST VOICE: Mrs Pugh
> MRS PUGH: nags the salt cellar [...]
> FIRST VOICE: The Reverend Eli Jenkins
> REV. ELI JENKINS: finds a rhyme and dips his pen in cocoa.
> (Thomas, D, 1954, pp. 31-32).

However, Hanley has no impersonal narrator but includes both the village poet and himself as its resident artists:

> Vaughan, quarryman, poet, thinks war is stupid, carries close inside him like two unhealing wounds, fear of extinction, horror of immortality [...]
> Davis Farmer says the bone is still hard in the land.
> Melvyn's dog whines outside my window.
> Hanley, chunky realist and flounderer in off-Dreiserian prose, naïve, and touchy about style, thinks up another one.
> Humphrey Accident wonders about rapid thaws, cars skidding, broken bones.
> The Roadman stays to his kitchen grate, reads an old copy of Jeans, thinks about stars, knows that for days yet all the roads are lost. (Hanley, 1953, p. 241)

Despite his self-deprecating references to a Dreiserian realism, Hanley appears to have re-discovered a lyrical and a rhythmic quality previously only manifest in his war-time *The Ocean* and *Sailor's Song*. Yet there is also here a construction of meaning which goes beyond eccentricity or an aesthetics of place. Implicit in the rhythmic lyricism is a Hanleyan identification with Wales as ancient and bardic: a land of poets. The prose is

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[283] The radio 'talks' which contained the seeds of the later play were 'Quite Early One Morning', broadcast on BBC Wales 31 August 1945, published in *Wales*, Autumn, 1946 and 'Return Journey, broadcast on the Home Service, 9 May 1947 (Thomas, 1983, pp. 361, 362).

decidedly un-Dreiserian, and now also repudiates the American's sense of the tragic. A characteristic earlier Dreiserian Hanley was to be found in; for instance, his short story 'An Accident' set in the 'modern' environment of the city:

> And somebody had pushed her off the tram. Her white basket was downstairs. She hadn't even got to the market...
> No more struggle, no more humiliation, no waiting, no tramping miles in winter, no more vain hopes. It was all finished. Just through an accident.
> 'Worn out,' he said, 'Simply worn out, crushed - .'(Hanley, 1938b, p. 174)

The industrial world is a place of finality, of irredeemably lost human souls, of degradation and despair, yet there is a particularly modern determination to identify a causal chain in the circumstances of the death, an impression that the text wants to blame, indict. Here in upland Wales, however, even the very cruelties and apparent indifferences of the human inhabitants are imbued with an almost admirable quality, a heightened sense of the tragic. So, for instance, the death of Rose Ann, the old farmer, evokes a structure of feeling reminiscent of J M Synge:

> It is like something from the Bible, it is like something from a dream... Far back in this room, seated against a wall, the aunt, the uncle, the grandfather and the child. Are they, too, dead? So quiet, motionless, looking towards the bed... There is mystery here, a vast incomprehensibility, an utter bewilderment. The question is as hard as a brute fist, as hard as these bare walls. Where has one seen its like? I think of the flight of the Jews, the flight from the Plague. The extraordinary silence hides an inevitable destruction. (Ibid, pp. 168,169)

Hanley invokes religious and artistic images from a cultural tradition which imposes mythical meanings, cyclical or timeless paradigms on historical events. That 'inevitable destruction' is similarly evoked in R S Thomas's vision of the Welsh hill country where:

> ... the dead and living
> Moved hand in hand on the mountain crest
> In the calm circle of taking and giving.
> (Thomas, R S, 1955, p. 38)

Unlike in the modern city which meaninglessly annihilates, ruthlessly crushes the human

individual, the event of death in the battle with the land, has a place in the natural order of things. Hanley's ostensibly documentary account of Llanfechain implicitly ignores the social and historical diversity of Wales, in favour of an imaginary and poetical relationship with its people and a partial conception of their nationality.

It was at this time that Hanley also began to align himself, not only with an idealized community, but with those writers whom he considered best represented the qualities of the ancient and the timeless which Wales still retained despite the invasions of modernity. With characteristic generosity, Hanley was actively promoting, among others, the Anglo-Welsh poet the Rev. R S Thomas, whose parish was then approximately forty miles to the west at Machynlleth. Hanley's friendship with Thomas was based on a shared love of the Welsh hill-farming communities, an admiration for Thomas's sense of humour and for him as a 'great disparager' (Hanley/Parry 20 12 56).[284] What Thomas and Hanley both 'disparaged' was the increasing intrusion of modernity into the village life of traditional Wales.[285] Hanley's 'peasants' closely resemble those hill farmers living out lonely and grim lives in Thomas's poetry. A characteristic figure in the latter's early work is the labourer or peasant, an ancient 'prototype' in an unchanging agricultural landscape who 'has been here since life began, a vague/ Movement among the roots of the young grass' (Thomas, R S, 1955, p. 70) yet is nonetheless an inscrutably alien figure:

> ... This is his world, the hedge defines
> The mind's limits; only the sky
> Is boundless, and he never looks up;
> His gaze is deep in the dark soil,

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[284] For example, Thomas would stay for supper at The Cottage while his wife attended art classes in Welshpool (Hanley/Parry, 20 12 56). Hanley had personally taken to London a representative 'bundle of manuscripts' of Thomas's work, some already published by small Welsh presses, to Rupert Hart-Davis who published it as *Song at the Year's Turning* in 1955 (Hanley/Newby, 8 12 54).

[285] In the mid Nineteen-fifties two close friends of Hanley - Idris Parry, an academic at University of Wales, Bangor and Dorothy Baker, a script editor and producer for BBC Features - separately recorded unscripted discussions between Hanley and Thomas. Parry's was broadcast in 1955 from BBC Wales, but Baker's for The Third was unusable because of the extent of both writers' 'reactionary' Welsh nationalism. (Baker, 1996, Parry, 1996)

As are his feet. The soil is all;
His hands fondle it, and his bones
Are formed out of it with the swedes
(Ibid p. 64).

Hanley's Jones Independent is just such a figure:

> How close he has been to the earth! What a product of sheer hard labour! [...] Perhaps at some time he crawled along the earth, elbows dug in. [...] Fighting the hard, poor-yielding miserably rewarding earth. The bone in the ground, and here and there, like miracles, the thin patches of grass. [...] For much labour, terrible sweats, the poor pence, the fat bacon, the bread, the cow's dribbling drops, the stunted and withered vegetables. (Hanley, 1953, p. 148)

The evocation of the ancient and enduring qualities of traditional Wales was also the continuing project of Hanley's old friend John Cowper Powys, now in his eighties, who had recently published his historical novel *Porius: A Romance of the Dark Ages*,[286] confirming his reconstructed identity as a specifically Welsh writer. Hanley's panegyric on Powys recalls the supposed inspiration for the novel being 'the morning he returned from a walk on the Berwyns in the depth of winter, where, on a mountain path he came upon a stone slab, upon which was written, 'Porius stood here' (Hanley, 1973, p. 6). Characteristically long and verbose, *Porius* draws upon the web of traditional and mythic material which substitutes for the dearth of documentary evidence from the last years of Roman Britain: a conglomerate of Arthurian, bardic, Celtic and Roman legend. Although the novel's action covers just one month, concentrated within its short time-span is the infinitude of mythic time, expressed through the legendary figures of Myrddin (Merlin) and the semi-historical poet Taliesin. Such temporally omniscient figures are traditional British versions of the Greek Tiresias and confirmation, in the Eliotian sense, of a late modernist aesthetic in Powys's novel, which is at once self-consciously ancient and

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[286] It was the third of his novels with settings in his re-adopted country. The previous two were *Morwyn, or the Vengeance of God*, 1937, his Dantesque, anti-vivisectionist fantasy; and *Owen Glendower*, 1941, which imaginatively develops the magical qualities of the 14th-century Welsh warrior hero alluded to in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*.

modern:[287]

> So primeval, so artless, so unadorned, so content with the immediate impression of the object or situation or event was Taliessin's[288] verse, that it left upon the mind a curious feeling of paradisic obscurity, the ecstatic sufficiency in fact of pure sensation about which it is impossible to say anything except what is implied in those childish proclamations so often repeated: "I was," or "I was there," or "I was with," or "I saw." (Powys, 1974, p. 414)

R S Thomas, too, evokes a similar structure of feeling in such poems as 'The Rising of Glyndwr', 'The Tree', 'Taliesin 1952', all of which depend upon that quasi-legendary conception of the Welsh past, and similar expressions are to be found in the poetry of Dylan Thomas's friend and contemporary, Vernon Watkins.[289]

Hanley's more developed intervention in a Welsh poetic tradition was his novel published the following year, also adapted into a radio play, *The Welsh Sonata*.[290] Although a modern tale, it has immediate associations with Powys's novel in that its dedication reads 'Remembering the Child at Llangwm' a town in the Corwen area where both Hanley and Powys lived before the war. Powys sets *Porius* in the ancient 'Valley of Edeyrnion', a word then still preserved in the name of the rural district: Hanley's significant place-name is Cynant, a fictional coining conflated from two of Hanley's former homes, at Tynant and Cynwyd. More significant still is the central narrative voice

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[287] As Myrddin declares of the young Taliesin's verse, 'I sometimes feel as if it were the sort of writing the old Greek prophet Tiresias might have dictated to his disciples'. (Powys, 1974, p. 410)

[288] The spelling is Powys's own.

[289] See, for instance 'Ballad of the Mari Lwyd' (1941), the poem Hanley discusses with 'The Roadman' of Llangyllwch (Hanley, 1953, p. 124); also 'Taliesin in Gower' and 'Taliesin and the Spring of Vision' (Watkins, 1967, pp. 50-52, 55).

[290] An excerpt from this work in progress, 'A Cloud Upon his Head' was accepted by P H Newby for the Third in April 1953 (Newby/ Hanley, 28 4 1953). Dorothy Baker, a features editor and producer, who became a close friend of the Hanleys, eventually adapted the completed novel for the Third after Hanley's first choice, the novelist Glyn Jones - then working for BBC Wales - had 'been through the script with a surgeon's knife - sometimes near the bone, sometimes near the arteries' (Hanley/Baker, 28 8 54).

of the village policeman of Cilgyn, Goronwy Jones, a 'retired bard' whose reports evoke the rhythmic incantations of a Taliesin. Hanley, thus, insinuates his own 'individual talent' into a still vibrant literary tradition by means of a breadth of linguistic competence, rich in topographic, stylistic and mythological cultural allusion. Hanley's 'Child' is 'Rhys the Wound from Cynant way', based on an actual vagrant known in the Edeyrnion district who, under the terms of a communal tradition was regularly fed, travelled free on buses, and was allowed to play freely with local children (Hanley, L, 1979).[291] Rhys's quasi-legendary status over a wide area of a fictional, yet recognizable North Wales is established in an opening series of stanza-like paragraphs:

> I can remember his strength.
> He was as powerful as two lions with jaws locked hard upon the same bone and each pulling his way.
> And stronger than the steel of Huw Ellis's great wheel held fast and bound on the tenth of March, and any movement sealed by ice and fire of the air on that hardest day.
> Strength of a man who one day seized Lewis's bull by the horns and in his anger twisted and broke its neck (Hanley, 1954b, p. 13)[292]

The style and rhythm of the text extensively proclaim both its musical qualities (*The Welsh Sonata: Variations on a Theme*)[293] and its identity with a specifically bardic Welsh tradition and culture. On another level it can be read as a conventionally modern police story, an investigation into the disappearance of a community's favourite son, whose

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[291] On the local tradition of 'gentry' in the district see Evans, H, 1948, pp. 54-64, a volume of local history which Hanley gave to his neighbour at the adjoining farm, Christmas 1935 (see above Chapter 12, p. 188).

[292] Compare, for instance Caradoc Evans's Bensha Wedding Bidder:

> He had great strength: he enticed a bull to the sea shore and into Caranoc's Cave and wrestled with it and brought it to its knees... he entangled in a fishing-net the merman who wrecked a vessel in New Quay and dashed him against the lighthouse rock. (Evans, 1990, p. 7)

[293] The musical term 'sonata' is textually suggested in a number of ways: the novel's lyrical form evoking the original Italian 'to sound'; the variety of rhythmical cadence recalls the 18th-century meaning of 'fast-slow-fast'; and the positioning of Goronwy Jones's first-person 'reports' at key moments imposes a tri-partite ABA2 structure (exposition - enunciation - recapitulation) from 'sonata-form' proper.

vagrancy is attributable to nothing more remarkable than a youthful disappointment in love. However, the explanation of why Rhys the Wound got his strange name, is clear evidence of a 'higher' cultural aspiration:

> Called Rhys The Wound by reason of a blow that he took when he was young and fiery, when his woman run off with a sailor named Parry from Swansea town. (Hanley, 1954b, p. 16)

Poetically sublimated, the detective tale is rendered into a form at once more ancient and more elemental. Parry, it transpires, was not always a sailor, but, originally a miner from 'Saturday town'.[294] The truth that emerges is that the farmer's son Rhys became the 'child' of Cilgyn, through a significant event; the 'blow' and the subsequent 'wound' being mythical allusions to the Arthurian 'dolorous blow' and the mysterious unhealable 'wound' of the Fisher King. Rhys is thus elevated to the status of sacrificial victim, the child of nature destroyed by the evil of industrialism. That idea gains greater aesthetic and moral force when it is revealed that the miner's success is due to his sexual conquest of the young woman. The struggle of miner against farmer symbolically enacts the elemental struggle of the rural and the natural with the invading forces of modernity. Furthermore, the fact that Parry has become a sailor associates him with Hanley's other condemned mariners such as Levine and Marius, since in the developing Hanleyan symbology the seafarer has gradually come to represent the corrupted and the irredeemable. An erstwhile exemplary figure - particularly during the War years - once the repository of wisdom, the non-settled figure of the itinerant, has become the bringer of disruption and is finally symbolic of the perpetual threat of the outside world to an enclosed traditional order.

Beyond that juxtaposition of two representative figures, another struggle is taking place. Despite his initial popularity Goronwy Jones does not prosper in the village of Cilgyn. Identifying too closely with the solitary Rhys, he becomes obsessed with 'the Child's' story and the transformation of his simple investigative notes into a dramatic poem

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[294] Although North Wales is now almost exclusively associated with agriculture, there was at the time of writing still a small coal-mining area twenty miles to the east of Edeyrnion around Ruabon and Wrexham.

symbolizes something of Hanley's own artistic struggle. Here, just like Rhys, the resolute pursuit of art itself (*l'art pour l'art*) is rendered antithetical to the necessary demands of the community. For his obsessive search for Rhys and the neglect of his duties, Goronwy is transferred back to the industrial world, his literary work condemned by both his landlady -'I never saw so much rubbish in all my life' - and his superior officer: 'Bards are so brilliant today, Jones, that you haven't an earthly chance'. These represent simultaneously a general expression of the communal misunderstanding of the artist and Hanley's particular artistic and social disappointments:

> Looking at Cilgyn I was sad about it, for always I have liked a shut in, locked away, far away place, that is quiet like a monastery. (Hanley, 1954b, p. 204)

Jones's final struggle alerts the reader to the problematics of Hanley's own position within the community and calls into question his claims for social inclusion. Such a position is, again, illuminated by the contemporary co-existence of Berridge's novel which, making no obvious bids for honorary admission to Welsh society, remains unassumingly the work of a privileged outsider. Yet its depth of local knowledge derives from her and Reginald Moore's unusual social position within the village. By all accounts Moore, who was known universally as Graham, was an extremely gregarious figure and well-liked by all sections of the community: a lover of pub games with the village men, the organizer of the village cricket team, yet, with Berridge, a frequent guest at local Anglo-Welsh social gatherings and parties.[295] The Hanleys, on the other hand, despite Timmy Hanley's natural fondness for the society of her own class, were seldom seen at these or any other village events, such as eisteddfodau or fêtes, and Hanley hardly ever visited the local pubs in the evening. The extent of their social interaction with village life was comparatively limited. It consisted of Hanley's daily walk from the cottage down to Oswald Edward's Post Office Shop, to collect and send his extensive mail and a visit to The Plas yn Dinas pub for a sandwich lunch where he would sometimes be joined by Mrs Hanley. Here, as Gladys Berger remembers, he would drink a glass or two of beer and talk to her mother, the landlady Mrs Humphries. The latter's daughter remembers him

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[295] Elizabeth Berridge's own view is corroborated by other villagers. See interviews with Berridge, 1996, Ann Edwards, Gladys Berger (née Humphries), 1992.

as very fond of her parents, but also as a very shy man who 'could not look her in the eye' and who would remain secluded within the small snug bar at the back (Berger, 1992). Apart from the occasional chat with their farmer neighbours, the Owens at Y Fridd, and the necessary contact with village tradespeople Hanley's social life at Llanfechain tended to be restricted to the small community of English artists and weekend visitors to the cottage from outside. He was certainly respected and liked, (Edwards, 1992) but was considered odd, even eccentric.[296]

A socially withdrawn Hanley, furthermore, emerges in the companion piece to 'Anatomy of Llanfechain' - again written in the first person - 'A Writer's Day'. Here Hanley represents himself as a reclusive writer totally immersed in the world he constructs: that of literature and specifically literary pre-occupations. His private contemplations of Mrs Trollope, Mussorgsky, Ensor and Melville are interrupted by the arrival of two figures who address him as Mr Anly or Mr H.: one a local reporter, to whom he rather condescendingly deigns to reveal something of his writer's method and the other a Mr Williams who asks him to write a letter. As Hanley returns to his Third Programme and his fulminations on proletarian writers, the reader is struck by the difference between this private world, to which he is eager to return, and that of the contingent Welsh one, despite an evident sympathy for the admirable qualities of their 'Welshness' (Hanley, 1953, p. 72).[297] Although Hanley has clear preferences for the

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[296] Ann Edwards, again, admired and respected Hanley but declared that no-one ever read his books. She was, however, familiar with the novels of Elizabeth Berridge (Edwards, 1992).

[297] Tecwyn Lloyd and Emyr Roberts contest the notion that those given to 'imaginative expression' invariably qualify for communal membership. They make the distinction between English writers - foreigners in their midst - and the indigenous ones. Welsh writers would not have been considered exceptional, but an outsider would have been 'difficult to classify':

> He's not a cleric, he's not a teacher, he comes into a category that's new. A Welsh writer is far closer to the people around him. A writer from outside would be considered middle class. (Lloyd, 1992)

Tecwyn Lloyd, who sadly died shortly after this interview (August 1992) was in a sense the kind of person Hanley imagined himself to be: a scholar in the midst of a rural community, a local grammar school boy who still maintained his friendship and

remoter literary rather than the local social, it is a position which is not without its problems. This is revealed in two 'features' written at this time devoted to two of his most admired literary mentors: respectively John Cowper Powys and Herman Melville. Co-incident with Hanley's current themes (1953) the former article betrays that same pre-occupation with both a Welsh national identity and the 'inner world' of the artist. Although as Hanley points out, Powys's qualities lay in his public achievements: as a prolific letter-writer, as a lecturer on the American circuit, it was his status as a solitary which appealed to Hanley:

> His real journeys were inward, back through his own consciousness. [...] I have always thought of him as a writer in the corner, one who stood clear of the mainstream, clear of the world that is going on, progressing, as they say. [...]. Let the world keep on progressing, he himself is buried in his own. Powys grew inwards. Within himself was his own lighthouse, his own mine. (Hanley, 1973, pp. 2-3)

While Powys's position approaches the writer's ideal, Hanley identifies more closely with Melville's struggle against lonely tedium in the Customs House cabin, a situation resembling that of Hanley in his solitary cottage, which he often describes as 'like a ship... my writing cabin [...] very small with a low deckhead' (Hanley, 1953, p. 61). As Hanley argues, Melville's 'Bartleby', in its 'close[ness] to its creator's bone' is the fictional expression of the writer's twenty year 'silence', which, eventually, only the proximity of the sea was able to 'break down' (Hanley, 1983, p. 77). The ultimate inscrutability of Melville is Hanley's dramatization of his own struggle, not only with his craft, but with the very problems of that solitude which otherwise was, for him, the artist's *sine qua non*.

Hanley's Art of Radio

Hanley's work of the 1950s reveals an increasing pre-occupation with the problems of solitary or withdrawn characters, retreating from explorations of the social domain in favour of domestic or inner space, and formally tending towards a more reduced, sparser

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connection with the people - like Emyr Roberts, the local grocer - with whom he had grown up.

style. In September 1959 Hanley wrote in praise of a new work by his friend, the BBC producer Donald MacWhinnie.[298] *The Art of Radio* was a plea for the appreciation of the medium as a *sui generis* art form, to which Hanley himself, along with other 'writers of distinction such as Wyndham Lewis, Dylan Thomas, Samuel Beckett, Eugène Ionesco' had made a significant contribution (MacWhinnie, 1959, p. 97). However Hanley's remark that it was 'the best essay I have read on this subject' (Hanley/MacWhinnie, 16 9 59) reflects not only his delight in such public recognition, but also his genuine agreement with MacWhinnie's emphasis throughout on a particular characteristic of radio: the created illusion that it is a private medium, speaking to an audience 'whose reflexes are individual, not collective' (MacWhinnie, 1959, p. 34), creating speech which is 'vivid to the inner ear' (p. 53), with a 'power to communicate secret states of mind, the inner world and private vision of the speaker' (p. 57). No less of an emphasis is laid on the aural effects of radio drama production which are frequently described using musical analogies: not only must the playwright be aware of 'poetic shape', of 'colour, movement, feeling' but must give consideration to 'emotion, rhythm, pattern' (p. 90) and the programme 'must be orchestrated for voices' (p. 106).[299] Such a conception corresponds to Hanley's own musical ear for dialogue, structure and dynamics, which had been rejuvenated by his application of radio techniques to the novel in, for example as already witnessed, *The Welsh Sonata* (see above note 293 and Burgess, 1990, p. ix).

Here can be identified clearly the source of formal changes and renewed emphases in Hanley's work - an intensification of poetic style, metaphor and dialogue and a concomitant reduction in realist conventions of descriptive prose and plot: in effect a movement toward broadcast dramatic form. MacWhinnie recognized that tendency in his adaptation of an earlier Hanley novel, *The Ocean*, which the former realized in terms of a 'poetic' convention: 'a dehumanized voice whispering to and for each character' in the

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[298] MacWhinnie had produced for the Third Programme Beckett's pioneering *All That Fall* and had adapted for The Home Service in May 1958 Hanley's *The Ocean*.

[299] The poetic and dramatic potential of radio had, in fact, been realized from its early years by producers such as Val Gielgud, Lance Sieveking, and Tyrone Guthrie, of whom the latter had explored 'the purely symphonic possibilities of the medium' (quoted in Drakakis, 1980, p. 20).

open boat 'to underline symbolical and poetical key moments' (p. 116), and through a non-realist rhythmic soundscape created by 'radiophonic' effects (pp. 178-80). MacWhinnie's modernist interpretation reinforces that poetic and privatized quality in Hanley's work with reference to the latter's monologue for radio, *I Talk to Myself* (1958) and its 'brilliant manner of using words to express the secret, unvoiceable world of a lonely, displaced man' (p. 170). The play reworks two Hanley short stories from the 1930s evoking the personal memoir of the retired sea captain.[300] As such it is close in its structure of feeling to the earlier meditations on Powys and Melville and also to another play written for BBC Wales, *A Winter Journey* (1957), in which a frail elderly woman is visited by an ominous unidentified voice: that of her own death. A common factor here is the plight of the aged which becomes an increasing preoccupation of Hanley's as he grows older, aligning himself with those who, similarly have become vulnerable and withdrawn. The other marked tendency, as also seen in, for example, *Levine* and *The Closed Harbour* is to locate essential or paradigmatic human conflicts in the domestic or the familial environment, which, as some of his friends have testified, was not unlike the close but not always harmonious situation within the Hanley family home. This is not to propose a simplistic biographical interpretation based on Hanley's reclusivity, since there are always present other social and aesthetic considerations which, particularly, become more insistent in Hanley's writing for television in the 1960s. It is during this period, in a climate of greater democratization and popularization in the arts, that a more active and committed Hanley participates in debates around the issues of a putative working-class affluence. All this is evidence, finally, of Hanley's struggle in later life to reconcile the contradictory impulses of both a subjectively withdrawn and a publicly engaged artistic identity.

It is significant that Hanley turns to drama for a means of further developing an already mature modernism, since the rapid post-war advance in communications and entertainment had determined a contemporary cultural condition in which, as Raymond Williams has argued, drama is 'built into the rhythms of everyday life' (Williams, 1989, p. 4). His

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[300] I.e. 'Captain Cruickshank' and 'The Old Ship' in Hanley, 1937c, pp. 313-358 and 359-368.

conception of a 'dramatized society' recognizes a partial achievement of Walter Benjamin's vision of a technologically transformed popular, participatory culture.[301] This began to be realized not so much in cinema, but - in Britain at any rate - in the relatively new medium of radio which, as Brecht foresaw, instead of isolating the listener, had the potential to 'bring [him or her] into a relationship' (Brecht, 1993, p. 52). As already witnessed in the administrative evolution of the BBC, such a possibility was already being actively promoted in the pre-war years by the Marxist and more democratic elements within the Features Department, as opposed to the more conservative, but nonetheless 'anti-naturalist' modernists in Drama.[302] Despite the division, there was much formal overlap and often little discernible difference between the two: both were experimenting with radio's technical apparatus in order to convey the 'illusion of reality', yet there was a distinction to be made between the two separate communicative functions of each form. Specifically dramatic productions of 'plays' - both classical and specially commissioned works - were creating effects to reproduce the conventional theatre's sense of a 'fixed reality' already shared by a cultural fraction whose priorities were 'literary' rather than social (Drakakis, 1981, p. 29). On the other hand the 'feature' itself was combining highly stylized effects with scripted parts for popular voices, to 'document' the processes of a shifting reality - rather than inviting an accession to an already established aesthetic. This is closely analogous to Brecht's distinction between the conventional 'Aristotelian' dramatic form as opposed to his own reconceptualization of the 'Epic theatre': the former being based on a set of conventions such as passive empathy, catharsis, inspirational experience, while the latter has a didactic purpose to create an informed, dispassionate, yet politically engaged audience (see Brecht, 1978, pp. 57-61). Paradoxically, it was the social mission of representing a people's collective experience to itself in time of war which determined the dominance of the 'feature'. Contributing to its formation was the BBC's huge staff of scriptwriters assembled from the national pool of novelists and poets,

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[301] As set out in Walter Benjamin's seminal essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (see particularly Benjamin, 1992, pp. 224-228).

[302] The former was first created as the 'Special Programmes' department in 1933 under Lawrence Gilliam, a protégé of D G (Archie) Harding (see Chapter 13, p. 224, notes 217, 218). The latter was begun the following year under Val Gielguid. Both remained heads of their respective departments for the next thirty years (see Drakakis, 1981, pp. 7-8).

including Hanley and the prolific Louis MacNeice. The consequence was that a hybrid dramatic form was unwittingly created: the didactic and informative priorities of propaganda and news having been the basis of what was essentially a new kind of theatre.

Some of the most innovative of radio drama productions of the first fifteen post-war years were conceived as features: including MacNeice's poetic 'fantasy' *The Dark Tower* (1946) and Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood* (1954).[303] This is not to argue that a Brechtian aesthetic predominated, but rather that there was much more of a popular or didactic quality to radio drama than is allowed by the self-justifying aesthetic of 'pure radio' (MacWhinnie, 1959, p. 59). Most of Hanley's BBC submissions in the early 1950s were to the Features Department, where his advocates were the script editors Maurice Brown and Dorothy Baker, the latter of whom adapted his novel, *The Welsh Sonata* in 1956. His first significant post-war excursion into the form, after those short features based on the civilian war effort, was *The Man in the Mirror*, a dramatized biography of the 19th century Russian composer Modeste Mussorgsky, interspersed with musical extracts. Originally conceived during the War but not broadcast until it was extensively revised in 1954, Hanley's feature was not submitted to the higher cultural formation of the Third Programme, but to the Northern Region. To write for a more general audience was in the spirit of the original conception which attributed the causes of Mussorgsky's neglect to his determination to adopt popular and folk forms as opposed to those of the conservatoire. What Hanley wanted was to make a 'case for Mussorgsky against a solid wall of academic opinion', a composer, whose artistic struggle was defined by a 'a war between the intellect and the emotions' (Hanley/Gilliam, August, 1941). As the script makes explicit, this was a reference, not so much to any internal conflict, but to Mussorgsky's refusal to be guided by any academicist prescriptions for musical

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[303] As Peter Lewis points out, Thomas's 'play for voices' represents the culmination of his prodigious career at the BBC as a broadcaster and features writer, which enabled him to apply 'the methods of the feature' to one of his own radio talks (Drakakis, 1981, p.77). Similarly, Christopher Holme argues, '... the Epic Theatre [...] must be the unquestioned standard of reference for the whole theatre movement with which MacNeice had long associated himself. He found there the theoretical justification of the teacher's stance which came so natural to his writing. His plays are didactic, sometimes even politically so...' (Drakakis, 1981, p. 70).

composition:

> MOUSSINKA: ... I want to find some reality, some truth, I want life itself. You see, Russia is not just you and me and a few ambitious young aristocrats who want to be original - - and play around with ideas and art. Russia is the humble people, its beggars and serfs and seedy clerks, hungry and dirty people, yet full of sadness and a drunken gaiety. They are the people I feel for and feel with. They are Russia. Not us. And I need to feel them in my bones; to feel that way to them. And they belong to me. It's then and only then I shall write my music. (Hanley, 1954c, p. 7)

Clearly expressed here is Hanley's own conviction of the artist's rôle, yet the critical condemnation within the play of Mussorgsky's tenacious adherence to a 'musical realist' style is also a metaphorical representation of the former's apprehensions about his own position. A putative 'quotation' from Tchaikovsky's epistolary dismissal of Mussorgsky reads like a condensation of negative critical opinion on Hanley:

> TCHAIKOVSKY ... The most talented of them all, but a man with seemingly no desire to make good his deficiencies [...] He belongs moreover to a rather low type, which loves what is coarse, unpolished, ugly - - very much in love with his own lack of culture, seems to be proud of his ignorance - - writes just whatever comes into his head. True enough, he has some very original ideas, but the idiom he speaks is not beautiful... (Ibid, pp. 20,21).

The text's dialectic between the social function of art and the question of individual artistic integrity marks a thematic concern which is further developed in two later radio works. Here, however, is a conscious movement away from the 'feature' or didactic style towards MacWhinnie's idea of radio's specifically 'dramatic' function. Constituting what is effectively a trilogy, two subsequent plays each have a central character who symbolically acts out the personal dilemma or crisis of the artist. The second, *A Letter in the Desert* (1958) specifically written as a 'play' re-works the earlier short story, 'Afterwards', so that the essentially victimized academic of the original - is transformed into a more culpable and wilfully neglectful figure, bitterly resented by his wife (a former concert pianist) who has 'sacrificed' her career in order to be her husband's domestic mainstay and support. An intensification of marital conflict is precipitated by two simultaneous events: the emblematic disappearance of the only evidence that Professor

French is still read - the death of his only faithful reader, an elderly grocer - and the former's discovery that his impending award of a literary prize is a humiliating hoax. Unlike in *The Man in the Mirror*, the artist is here condemned, not for his social allegiance but for his precise lack of it: the tragic implications of which call into question the sustainability of the will to artistic reclusion. French's tragedy is that he has relinquished the very emotional and social bonds upon which the production of his art has depended.

What cannot be ignored at this moment is an argument which seeks to locate the meaning of such plays solely in that world of private conflicts. It has been plausibly argued that from *A Letter in the Desert* onwards, the dramas of close domestic antagonism are implicit dramatizations of Hanley's own domestic situation: the personal tensions between James and Timmy Hanley having by this time become noticeable to an increasingly wider circle of friends.[304] Although many speak of warm and friendly weekends in Wales, the 'entrancing' nature of the cottage location and its interior, throughout the 1950s there was evidence of a growing tension. It was observed that Hanley was 'self-absorbed', while Timmy was 'lonely' in the countryside; it was suspected that Timmy Hanley was 'disappointed' that James was not more successful, and there was a general agreement that the domestic settings of the radio plays were 'thinly disguised' expressions of their private situation. The physical evidence of this was the onset of Timmy's chronic clinical depression, particularly after the departure of their closest friends, Reginald and Lisa Moore, for London in 1950 when the former went to work for John Baker's Phoenix House press. From that moment there were a number of letters from both Timmy and James expressing regret at still being in Wales (see Chapter 14, Note 254) but mostly from Timmy who longed to move back to London. It could certainly be argued that the relationship was unequal, in that James was content as always to be reclusive, whereas Timmy missed the metropolitan gregariousness. Hanley relied very much on his wife's good will and emotional support, but his artistic struggles were always more than just at the personal level. Such a reductive interpretation ignores the

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[304] Not all informants are happy to be quoted on this matter, but see Jones, 1993; Berridge, 1996; Froud, 1996. Liam Hanley freely offers his opinion that *A Letter in the Desert* concerns to some extent the antagonisms within his parents' relationship.

ways in which Hanley continually confronts the social and cultural as well as the personal priorities of the creative process.

The theme of artistic dependency is further developed in Hanley's conclusion to the trilogy, *Gobbet*, produced by Donald MacWhinnie the following year. The 'artist' is the elderly Christian, a music-hall performer who has made his dwarf son into a ventriloquist's doll in order to revive a failing career. The logic, if not the morality, of such a grotesquely exploitative act is explained by the fearful presence of the human original:

> CHRISTIAN... Who in heaven's name would have liked you for a present, anyhow? If you'd have come out of a hole in the hill, we'd have understood - I still think you've got some relations down that hole - but I'm not <u>sure</u> and it might be terrible to be certain - .(Hanley, 1959, p. 9)
>
> ANTAEUS... Heavens, he cried, what a gobbet, what a bent and battered monster between your legs, and who in hell was <u>your</u> grandmother? (Ibid, p. 11)

Both the father, Christian and the son Jackie (re-named Antaeus) express the fear that his 'creation', the product of some unnatural congenital contamination, betrays a denied social or racial origin: that his grotesque progeny reveals an implicit association with something primitive, atavistic, <u>sub</u>-human. Yet that realization is compounded by a secondary process, the formation of 'Antaeus' out of the gobbet: what at least had a natural semblance of life is suppressed by its parodic reification:

> ANTAEUS ... I'll paint his bloody mug, he said -
>
> CHRISTIAN (<u>Distantly</u>) Little <u>after</u>-birth. If I painted your mug it was only because you were so damned ugly, and I simply couldn't bear the thought of our little gamecock being laughed at - [...]
> And very pretty you looked then, my little globule, very pretty, and even your cousins down in that hole in the hill would have been pleased at the sight of you -
>
> ANTAEUS [...] So they gave me a suit, they gave me a collar and bow - and after that - [...] I'll stiffen his hair forever, he said, and he <u>did</u>.
> (Ibid, pp. 10,11)

The re-naming of Jackie as Antaeus and the mode of his transformation are dialectical: on the one hand the 'noble name' signifies an artistic will to working-class transformation, a process which Herbert Marcuse calls '*artistic alienation*', that is 'the conscious transcendence of the alienated existence' from the ordinary to a 'higher level';[305] while on the other hand, the aesthetic reduction of the human to the commodity form - what Marcuse calls 'desublimation' - reveals art's incorporation into the very commercial world it seeks to negate (Marcuse, 1966, pp. 60,72). In either case art is disclosing its ambivalence towards the social reality on which it depends: both proclaiming its putative autonomy in sublimated forms (Antaeus), and disclosing its desublimation by the commercial processes (the painted doll). The artist's intuition of his guilty part in this process is signalled by the death of Christian's wife whom he has emblematically alienated in the pursuit of his career: a more extreme dramatization than the earlier play of the way art denies the emotional as well as the social roots of its origins. Still more extreme, however, is Hanley's 'tragic' ending in which, during an onstage rebellion by the 'puppet', the artist - like the puppetmaster in the Russian folk-tale 'Petrushka' - destroys his own creation.[306] Although he reluctantly admired the play, P H Newby took issue with Hanley over *Gobbet*'s extremism because of his suspicion that it had gone beyond its remit as a 'dramatic' form and 'assume[d] the dimensions of some natural calamity' (Newby/Hanley, 13 10 59). Hanley, in reply, denied this arguing that

> There is something <u>public</u>, exposed, totally revealed about a natural calamity. A hundred people vanishing beneath a wave is a calamity but the father who sees his child drown is [sic] a tragedy. (Hanley/Newby, 18 10 59)

What Hanley fears is that a naturalist interpretation somehow overlooks the private and

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[305] The symbolic identification of subterranean peoples with the industrial working class - implying both repression and denial - had already been strongly suggested, for instance, in Richard Wagner's Nibelungen race and H G Wells's Morlocks: the metaphoric transmutation of Northern myth to the context of 19th century social and national crises.

[306] In this sense Hanley is writing in the tradition of symbolic creation or creativity narratives familiar not only from the Russian folk-tale (with which as a Russophile he would have been familiar) but also from such cultural forms as the Jewish legend of the Golem or Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

subjective pain of the sufferer. 'Real suffering,' he goes on to explain, 'is sacred, private, intensely personal', implying that his work is always gesturing toward some meaning which cannot be made outwardly explicit, articulating a liminal truth that is almost beyond words. However, in the same letter Hanley refers to each individual work he produces as his 'child'. Therefore the close analogy between the familial and the artistic experience confirms that his concern here is - unconsciously - the crisis of his own relationship with his readership/ audience: the modernist dilemma that the artist's individual, unrelenting quest has been misunderstood or that the sensibilities of the former have been disregarded. As P H Newby later perceptively added:

> Unless [the artist] can inspire in his reader (or listener) the same sense of passionate or compassionate enquiry as he feels himself, there is a pretty good chance of producing a monster. (Newby/Hanley, 20 10 59)

Paradoxically, the final scene in which a jeering uncomprehending audience witnesses the destruction of the uncontrollable puppet/ child represents the public recognition of that private fear: that art has lost its autonomous or dispassionate relation to an external reality and has become obsessively pre-occupied with itself.

Such was the intuition which lay at the root of Hanley's artistic struggle during the final years. In his adoption of the dramatic method itself - in which can be discerned a Beckettian or Strindbergian reductivism - lay a determination to arrive at some fundamental level of human experience, yet at the same time there is always an alternative recognition that this is not enough, that a concentration on the private preoccupations of the self leads to an impasse. Thus, despite his often expressed contention that his imaginative 'journeys' were always towards a subjective interior,[307] the works produced during the 1960s and 1970s also began to explore, principally through the medium of television, the ways in which an artist can re-engage with an identifiable audience and with the conditions of a determining social reality. Therefore what ostensibly appear to

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[307] Again, see the aforementioned letter to Newby: 'My journeys are inwards, in, not out[;] down, not up' (Hanley/Newby, 18 10 59). The play was adapted for the stage as *The Inner Journey*.

be dramatizations of intensely private or domestic struggles, are, at the symbolic or metaphoric level, representations of much wider social and cultural contestations. Hanley's play-writing career is often represented as short-lived or an experimental failure, yet his excursions into dramatic method had the beneficent effect of transforming the writing of the 1970s - mostly novelizations of projects originally intended as plays - determining a form at once more concise and dialogic. A pivotal and characteristic work which illustrates Hanley's formal mobility is *Say Nothing*, which was first conceived as a radio play, then staged, novelized and finally produced as his first play for television.[308] Its appearance as a novel was anomalous since Hanley had virtually abandoned the form after completing *An End and a Beginning* in December 1957, having declared that, due to the encouragement of such enthusiasts for his work as Donald MacWhinnie and John Griffiths, he would 'do what I always wanted to do - write [plays] and to hell with novels' (Hanley, Griffiths, 26 12 57).[309] Although his bursts of enthusiasm often seemed exaggerated, such a declaration harks back to Hanley's early passion for, above all, Strindberg, the dramatist with whom he has most affinity.

Say Nothing returns to the familiar Hanleyan territory of an industrial town. The opening words of the original radio play - spoken by the narrator, Elston - recall a characteristic Strindbergian description from the later Chamber Plays in which the façade of a house or street determines a dominant expressionist structure of feeling:

> ELSTON (quietly): The houses are very tight, in a tight town. The doors seem as if they were closed forever, the curtains on the windows are as stiff and motionless as sentinels. A hugged, and clutched and cringing place.[310]

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[308] Originally for radio, broadcast on The Third Programme, 12 April 1961, produced by Donald MacWhinnie; staged at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, August - September 1962, directed by Richard Rhys; and broadcast in the 'Festival' series on BBC Television, 19th February, 1964, directed by Philip Saville.

[309] Apart from the instance already mentioned, he kept to his resolution until 1972 when he was contracted to write novels again by André Deutsch, who had known Hanley when the former was a reader at Nicholson & Watson in the immediate post-war years.

[310] See for instance *Storm Weather*:
THE CONSUL: ... Those four red shades look like theatre curtains with bloody melodramas in rehearsal behind them [...] There's a palm tree in that apartment

(Hanley, 1961, p. 1)[311]

As in the Chamber Plays, meaning is constructed not so much out of characterization or plot, but through mood and symbolic action. The young student Elston's relationship to the Baines family is analogous to that of Strindberg's 'Student' to the Colonel's household in *The Ghost Sonata*, both of whose function is to fulfil some emotional gap within the complex web of relationships: to rejuvenate a domestic regime in decline.

Joshua Baines, like The Gentleman and The Confectioner in *Storm Weather*, is without ambition - 'a failure, the will-less one' (Hanley, 1961, p.5), but most significantly his situation expresses not so much a general human condition, but one which is characteristic of a specific class position. As argued in the Introduction above (p. 3) Georg Lukács defines the fundamental relation of working-class consciousness to cultural productivity, making the necessary connection between 'reification' - the logical consequence of commodity production - and the antinomies and systematic limitations of modern bourgeois thought. What the latter is unable to comprehend is the 'material substratum of irrationality or concrete content' which lies beyond the delimiting horizon of its own culture (Lukács, 1971, p. 104). A resolution of the difficulty is through the dialectic, the preserve of the working class, in which a knowledge of the subject as object (worker as commodity) enables a material grasp of the social totality. Although Lukács is antipathetic to any notion of working-class cultural productivity, unless it is written out of a

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that casts a shadow on the curtains like an iron funeral spray.

or *The Burned House*:

THE BRICKLAYER: ... There's something strange about this street. Once people come here they never get away, that is, maybe they do move, but they always come back sooner or later. End up in the cemetery over there, at the end of the street.
[...] We call it the Swamp
(Strindberg, 1962, pp. 5, 53-54)

[311] The words are reproduced virtually verbatim in the novel version by the first person narrator, who is, again, Elston. (see Hanley, 1962, p. 9)

developing socialist society.[312] Hanley's writing is here exemplary of that insight in its radical transformation of a Strindbergian aesthetic, a later version of his own earlier representations of human beings as machine-like, as dehumanized to the level of animals or automata, or as dwellers in an abyss. The social totality is grasped by that very dialectic between a surface illusion of rational social integrity (the law student) and an underlying private absurdity and chaos (the Baines family). Joshua Baines is 'the man of nails' (Hanley, 1961, p. 22), the lumbering, 'physically huge' nail-factory worker - who nevertheless manages to play the flute[313] - has a consciousness determined by his daily being 'in nails':

> JOSHUA. Hammering in, hammering down. Hammer in my head, at night, - - - dream, often dream and the hammering, the hammer - - - -. (Ibid, p. 5)

Likewise, the text is replete with metallic metaphors: as well as nails, there are constant references to catches, locks, knives, bolts, creating a hard-edged, forbidding, spiky, shut-in world reminiscent of the morbidity pervading *The Burned House*, signified by the onstage presence throughout of '"The Coffin Nail" tavern where the hearses pull up, and the condemned men used to get their last glass on the way to the gallows' (Strindberg, 1962, p. 67). In Hanley's play a funerary or sepulchral atmosphere is evoked by Baines's intonings from the Bible and the family's desire to secure its enclosed world against any invasions or contaminations from outside:

> ELSTON.(narrating) I hear the window catch (Click)
> The bolts tried (Bolts). Nothing will get in, and nothing will get out. (Hanley, 1961, p. 9)

Furthermore the weekly routine is bounded by Sunday trips to the cemetery, at which a

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[312] See 'Critical Realism and Socialist Realism' which makes the presence of an interior class 'perspective' the criterion for a distinction between bourgeois and socialist forms, but concerns itself only with Soviet intellectuals - Gorky, Sholokhov - not with any examples from pre-socialist states (Lukács, 1963, pp. 94-99).

[313] In the stage and TV versions, Baines plays the trombone, an instrument more congruent with the weighty figure of John Sharp, a well-known TV character actor, who played Baines in all three dramatic versions and became a friend of the Hanleys.

bizarre ritual is enacted by Joshua, Mrs Baines, and her sister Winifred. Mrs Baines is forced by the latter to prostrate herself and do penance before the grave of Tom, a former lodger and Winifred's fiancé, whom, on the eve of his wedding, Mrs Baines took to her bed. The young law student, Elston - whose position is characterized by a studied distance and an ostensible rationality - while initially sympathetic, is finally overwhelmed by the separate confidences of each family member, whose common concern is that he 'say nothing' to the others.

The attitude is similar to that of Strindberg's Stranger in *The Burned House*, and the Student in *The Ghost Sonata*, in which a common response to the modern condition is to represent it as 'a madhouse' (cf. Hanley, 1961, p. 49; Strindberg, 1962, pp. 73, 151). Yet, although, for instance, *The Burned House* is peopled with members of an artisanal working class, the privileged world-view in Strindberg is inevitably claimed by the socially transcendent outsider. In *Say Nothing*, while meaning ostensibly inheres in Elston's metatextual commentary, his words are, in fact, much less intelligible than those of the Baineses, and a dialectic is maintained between an uncomprehending bourgeois privilege and a vocally restricted yet articulate working class:

> ELSTON. ... Are we perhaps approaching the region of the incommunicable? I can only look, and go on looking, from one to the other of this trinity, willed by weakness or strength. One wonders which. (Hanley, 1961, p. 18)

Elston's limited though judgemental position is directly challenged by both Mrs Baines - 'You look at us Charlie, as though you knew everything' (Ibid, p. 38) - and Joshua:

> ELSTON. ... I wonder why Mrs Baines likes money so much?
> JOSHUA. ... If you said that at Lawler's [the factory], Charlie, they'd know you come from up there.
> ELSTON. Up <u>where</u>?
> JOSHUA. Up from where you come <u>from</u>, Charlie.
> (Ibid, p. 34)

What Charlie Elston doesn't understand is the degree to which affective relations have become destabilized by the reductive power of the commodity, in which family and

religious values have no other real foundation except in monetary exchange: marriage as a contractual obligation; transgression as debt; salvation as labour; money as the only constant:

> MRS BAINES. [to Joshua] ... Who can you rely on to-day, where can you be sure, and money's never stopped being money, and I don't care who gets into that room so long's they help to push the rainy day farther off [...]
> Charlie saw the lot today, but he's half asleep and doesn't understand anything about us.(Ibid, p. 45)

Elston's profession in the law may confer on him an intellectual advantage, but it does not afford him any insight into a social class which affirms its belief in a non-conformist moral authority ('Only one law, really, Charlie. It's in the Word' - p. 7). Hanley's dialectic between a bourgeois incomprehension and a working-class articulation is the foundation of his dramas of social contestation of which *Say Nothing* is the first in a series. It is important to emphasize the sociality from the outset, since initially it is all too tempting to locate these plays within 'a major structure of feeling' in contemporary drama, which, as Raymond Williams observed, television's 'technical possibilities' were able to exploit: 'the enclosed internal atmosphere; the local interpersonal conflict; the close-up on private feeling' (Williams, 1974, p. 56). The cultural context in drama is of course the emergence in the British theatre of a European dramatic tradition - Martin Esslin's 'the Theatre of the Absurd' - exemplified in the work of Samuel Beckett and his natural successor Harold Pinter. It has already been argued how Hanley both writes against and colludes in the Beckettian ideology, yet in the later plays it is Pinter who provides a more pertinent frame of reference, as recognised by both Hanley's supporters among the BBC staff and contemporary dramatic commentators.[314] The dominant critical paradigm has been constructed around the notion of an essentially tragic or absurdist

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[314] See, for instance, John Russell Taylor's commentary on *Say Nothing* which 'proved with no knowledge of Pinter, Beckett et al., to have reached almost the same conclusions as many of our young contemporaries about dramatic style and form' (Taylor, 1963, pp. 323-4); and Brian Miller's internal memo to the director John Tydeman, recognizing in Hanley's *Another World* a 'poetic dialogue of a high order' and the 'pregnant silences and break-offs' reminiscent of Pinter's screenplay for *The Servant* (Miller/Tydeman, 28 11 63).

conception of the human condition, traced through a representation of the enclosed domestic space,[315] yet Hanley's comparability with Pinter relies not so much on such conventional interpretative tools as 'The Absurd' or territorial 'usurpation' but on the way the latter deploys within similar situations the more socially intelligible category of class.

Cultural Form: Hanley and Television

The social nature of the plays is made all the more intelligible by the emergence of the cultural dominance of television, a medium which both playwrights have successfully exploited. The development of broadcasting technology was a social consequence of two contradictory tendencies within society: 'on the one hand mobility, on the other hand the more apparently self-sufficient family'. New capitalist developments had created greater distances between the workplace, centres of government and the home, demanding an appropriate medium for communication between the more centralized superstructural forms - education, information and entertainment - and the newly isolated, though still socially cohesive unit of the family (See Williams, 1974, pp. 26-28). As a 'cultural form' television represented an intensification of the functions of radio, in that, in the post-war period, it became increasingly deployed through selective programming, and through the exploitation of the medium itself, as a means of social control allied to commercial and governmental interests. As Williams asserts, as the medium developed under the influence of commercial television, so its ideological potential was realized in the practice of 'programming'. One of its more regrettable 'controlled' effects was that during whole evenings or even lengthier periods of 'watching television', the differentiation between a range of discrete forms - news, advertisements, announcements, documentaries, dramatic serials and series - was significantly diminished so that, instead of the opportunity for selection and discrimination, the viewer actually received 'the <u>flow</u> of meanings and values of a specific culture' (Ibid, p. 118, emphasis added). These have been the intentions behind an institutionalized medium in which an 'apparently unmediated

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[315] See, for instance, Ganz, 1972, whose principal critical criteria are technique, language and psychology; and Martin Esslin's classic study *The Theatre of the Absurd*, whose aesthetics are concerned with the way Pinter produces 'a feeling of the absurdity and futility of the human condition' or with how his characters confront 'the basic problem of being' (Esslin, 1962, pp. 215, 221).

access' masks what is actually a highly mediated form (Ibid, p. 132). However, as Williams further argues, this reckons without television's 'uncontrolled effects', whereby the variability of television, particularly from its American alternatives, offers the possibility of the creation of new meanings, particularly from those who have been brought up on television, so that 'alternative definitions and practices' inevitably emerge.

It is against the ideological deployment of controlled effects that working-class dramatists intervened in television, a process which also produced a quantitative shift in the medium's visible class constituency. Since the 1950s, representations of working-class life had been increasingly foregrounded in cultural forms, particularly in the commercially successful series of novels and plays by working-class writers, popularized through the paperback publishing revolution and the 'New Wave' school of realist films.[316] This was accompanied by the inauguration of the first genuinely popular working-class television serial: *Coronation Street*, launched in December 1960. A more significant gain for working-class representation had already been secured within Independent Television's 'Armchair Theatre', begun in 1958, a series of weekly single plays which included some innovative work by playwrights such as Alan Plater and Alun Owen (the latter, like Hanley, from Liverpool). Its success was due to a former employee of John Grierson at the National Film Board of Canada,[317] the producer Sidney Newman, whose retrospective summary of a career in broadcasting was that he had established 'the working man as a fit subject for drama, and not just a comic foil in middle-class manners' (quoted in Briggs, 1995, p. 396). The BBC soon realized the potential of the vogue in working-class forms of representation and flagrantly lured Newman away from ABC Television to create a rival series, which materialized in 1964 as 'The Wednesday Play'.

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[316] See particularly the novels: John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 1957; Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 1958; Keith Waterhouse, *Billy Liar*, 1959; David Storey, *This Sporting Life*, 1960; Stan Barstow, *A Kind of Loving*, 1960; and Shelagh Delaney's play, *A Taste of Honey*, 1958, all of which were made into highly successful films between in 1961-2.

[317] The degree of its success can be gauged by Pinter's calculation that 'in order to match the audience of 6,380,000 viewers who saw his play *A Night Out*, his stage play *The Caretaker* would have to have run for thirty years' (*Daily Telegraph*, 30 May 1960, quoted in Briggs, 1995, p. 192)

It was during his tenure of only five years as Head of Drama (1962-67) that working-class writing regularly reached peak viewing figures of between 6 and 8.6 million (Ibid, pp. 519-20), not only with such pioneering 'Wednesday Plays' as Dennis Potter's 'Nigel Barton' couplet, Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction* (1965) Jeremy Sandford's *Cathy Come Home* (1966), but also the popular police series *Z Cars*, and its successors, whose regular writing team included Alan Plater and John McGrath.[318]

It was at the moment of television's growing power as a popular medium that James and Timmy Hanley made a sudden and unexpected move back to London in 1963. Whatever the real reasons, it was clear that a crisis point had been reached - either emotionally in the marriage or as a result of financial pressures or both. At least, being close to the metropolitan centre meant that there were greater opportunities to make contacts with the cultural producers. From a writer who had become increasingly reclusive, it was a decisive move which was reflected, to a certain degree, in his own intervention in the new genre of television drama and the developing social diversity of the medium itself. Although his eight plays for the BBC from 1964 to 1969, and the continuing productions for radio, which he does not abandon, are at times tentative, exploratory and do not generate such overtly political meanings as those of his fellow playwrights, there is a thematic consistency in the way Hanley represents social conflict at the level of language.

As in, for instance, Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter* or *The Birthday Party*, Hanley's men and women are also the victims of arbitrary judgements imposed without recourse to any rational or legal process, so that when the individual agents referred to as 'them' or 'we' or 'the Council' arrive, it is with a shocking and devastating swiftness. Characters in states of relative security are suddenly under threat from an external, unintelligible, force or agency. Although Hanley's social situations are similar - they are, like Pinter's, versions of the Strindbergian room in which struggles appear to be waged at the personal

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[318] In fact, Newman's whole emphasis in all three of the separate divisions he created - serials, series, single plays - was on collective production: which proved effective not only in *Z Cars*, but in regular collaborations on single productions, the most significant being that of Tony Garnett (producer) Ken Loach (director), Jim Allen (writer). See Hewison, 1986, pp. 30-32.

level[319] - his working-class characters are more linguistically resistant to the ideology of language. The means of their fighting back is not through any physical struggle, but through the force of the imagination: as, for instance in the poetic recollections of the elderly women whose collective consciousness has been shaped by the language and images of the sea. Just as Captain James in *I Talk to Myself*, (1958) recreates a maritime past in his head, as a poetic revolt against a surrounding sea of bricks and concrete, so too do Hanley's widows and lonely women take comfort and strength from memories of their sailor sons and former associations with the sea. In another short radio play, *The Queen of Ireland* (1960) Mrs Clancy confronts the announcement of her son's death with a series of memories in the poetic mode of the earlier *Sailor's Song* and that same structure of feeling is transposed into two further explorations of the same theme, both broadcast in 1967: the radio play *One Way Only* and a production for BBCTV's Thirty Minute Theatre, *That Woman*. Against an external condition of a repressive monotony or bureaucratic conformity, Hanley's elderly construct an inner refuge of resistance in the form of a distinctly poetic form of class expression. A common dramatic means of representing a reduced homogeneous reality is to quantify its meagreness and uniformity: what is described in another short play as 'a world dominated by the word "one"'.[320]

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[319] Hanley's early inspirational thoughts bear a resemblance to Pinter's original dramatic ideas, in that both see a potential in the enclosed domestic space. During his time as a rail-worker, Hanley would contemplate at night the ambience of a dimly lighted room at the end of the long platform:

> What more ideal stage could there be for such a playwright? This large bleak-looking room, with one dim light. The long wooden table and two chairs and the fire, like all railway fires, just on its last. 'That's all Strindberg wants,' I said to myself. 'A table, two chairs and a large room'
> (Hanley, 1937a, p. 258)

Compare Pinter in his introductory essay, 'Writing for Myself':

> I went into a room and saw one person standing up and one person sitting down, and a few weeks later I wrote *The Room*. I went into another room and saw two people sitting down, and a few years later I wrote *The Birthday Party*. I looked through a door into a third room, and saw two people standing up and I wrote *The Caretaker*.
> (Pinter, 1986, p. 10)

[320] I.e. *Miss Williams* (Hanley, 1960b, p. 4)

The same kind of paucity of surroundings is encountered by Elston in the Baines household, and is almost exactly reproduced in Mrs Monahan's lonely flat perched on the top of a tower block in *One Way Only*. As her probation officer observes:

> MRS LAURENT: (musing) Bed. Chair. Table. Mirror.
> [...] One brush.
> One comb. One vase.
> (Hanley, 1967a, p. 14)

Alienated from the reconstructed urban landscape - 'High up. In the concrete [...] near the darkness' - Brigid Monahan, has succumbed to frequent bouts of drunkenness, which gives to her world the semblance of a former communal vitality. Condemned alike by public house, court, and probationary service, she creates the internal vision of an imaginary son, his life at sea and the prospect of his return:

> MRS MONAHAN... he's very strong, course you have to be on a ship, a very big ship it is. [...] I'd be proud walking down the street with him when he came home, looking up at him, so tall he is, you never saw such fair hair, and there's a big lock of it on his forehead, won't stay back... (Ibid, p. 19)

Similarly in *That Woman* Mrs Twomey is the servant and go-between of an estranged couple who occupy entirely separate parts of the house. Whereas the language of the owners is given to monosyllables, brief utterances, phatic speech, that of Mrs Twomey and her visitor, Mrs O'Halloran is rich in eloquent memory:

> TWOMEY:... and the things that come into your head when your're quiet. The places you travels to in your mind. The minute I was talking about Michael, why he was fully home to me, so he was. All that long while ago, strange tis indeed, an the bloody weight of water that took him down... (Hanley, 1967b, p.43)

What is common in these plays is the extent to which the dominant class, with all its official wisdom and command of language, is so remarkably inarticulate: its perception hampered by its very limitations, a myopic ignorance which cannot grasp the nature of an alien sensibility.

In addition, Hanley is able to exploit the visual possibilities of television to make expressive the silence into which people are driven, particularly in his two Wednesday Plays, *A Walk in the Sea* and *It Wasn't Me*. In the latter - his most 'Pinteresque' and least naturalistic play - a voluble and ruthless businessman, Shafton - who bears more than a casual resemblance to Pinter's Goldberg - deals in the 'disposal' of unwanted family members. The inconvenience in question is an elderly father, whose death is surveyed and overseen - but not caused - by the incredibly invasive powers of Shafton and Son, who almost mystically know and control everything. The working-class couple - significantly called Webber - who struggle with their desire to rid themselves of 'the nuisance', are inevitably defeated - as is their namesake in *The Birthday Party* - by the incontrovertibility of the oppressor's words: Shafton's deft and insistent dismissal of all their objections in a language of coolly commercial and bureaucratic logic:

> SHAFTON: You cannot very well renounce the obligations, indeed the desire that brought you here. There are no morals involved. People who call to see us conveniently leave their morality outside. (TURNS TO EDNA) You do still wish to be obliged, quietly, in the soft, safe darkness and so secure corner, you still desire to see the back of father without the slightest inconvenience.
> (Hanley, 1969, p. 46)

The closing shots witness what Shafton and son call 'a very private death' - a death from neglect rather than any real desire for it, but which is made all the more likely by a general depletion in the values of social responsibility (Ibid, p. 94).

Such a position represents an extreme in Hanley's growing pessimism in his later years,[321] but there is also discernible a countervailing movement towards some kind of contemporary communal resolution. Community is again the conceptual key, an idea

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[321] Its ultimate expression is Hanley's stage play, *The Stone Flower*, 1968. Here, a sailor, Gareth, finds himself cast out from his private Eden when, returning from a voyage to Valparaiso, he inadvertently 'poxes' his pregnant wife Mair, killing the unborn child. In a text of such unrelieved misery, no possibility of redemption can be found, either in Mair's forgiveness, or in the granting of a ritual purification by the chapel's elders. All that survives of a once fostering and caring community is the mother's compassion, which, in the last scene, is ultimately rejected by the implacable Mair (See Hanley, 1968a, p. 150).

which, in Hanley's imagination, still inheres in those dual inspirational domains of the sea and Wales, but neither is it altogether absent in the ostensibly despised environment of the city. Something of this structure of feeling can be traced from his second play for television, *The Inner World of Miss Vaughan* (1964) and is further encountered in the social struggles of his first 'Wednesday Play', *A Walk in the Sea* (1966). In the opening shots of the latter, the elderly Miss Bealby sits alone listening to an extract from the 17th century poet, Thomas Traherne's *Centuries of Meditations*. The voice is that of a putative heavenly being who, having descended to an Edenic earth, surveys its uncorrupted wonders:

> ... Oh what venerable and reverend creatures did the aged seem. Immortal cherubims [...] and glittering and sparkling angels and maids, strange, seraphic pieces of life and beauty...(Hanley, 1966, p. 1)

As indicated, the second sentence misses out the words 'and young men' from the original, thus creating the sense that Miss Bealby is a representative of some former age of human innocence. Traherne's words signify a resistant, ostensibly non-rational mode of understanding - associated with an older generation - beyond that of the consciously rational yet repressive language of authority. The latter is the prerogative of bureaucracy which, in the interests of self-legitimation, distorts the syntax of genuine social progress. What were once the linguistic signifiers of collective consciousness, have been assimilated into a debased official form. Miss Bealby's impending eviction is explained in the following terms:

> JONES: ... We have of course taken everything into consideration: situation and plan have been thoroughly worked over. Naturally, you'll be compensated, and the Council is willing to be more than generous [...]
> I use the plural, Madam, since both the responsibility and the decision is a collective one. We are sorry, of course, but there are others to think about. There always are. It's the big headache, Miss Bealby. I mean those others, always around. (Ibid, p. 21)

Such a language alienates the individual from actual forms of human association, while the abstraction, 'the Council', establishes itself as the only protection against the claims

of the threatening 'others'. Although Miss Bealby has her supporters in the community, they - particularly the ineffectual vicar - are powerless to intervene. What speaks on behalf of her eventual silence is the voice of Traherne - representing the voices of her uncomprehending oppressors - claiming for her an eloquence beyond the ordinary level of articulation:

> RADIO VOICE: Hast thou heard the secret counsel? And doest thou restrain wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou that we know not? What understandeth thou which is not in us?
> (Ibid, p. 97)

Final Journeys: Drama and the Novel

That eloquence, which is essentially poetic and inspirational, is central to the works of Hanley's last productive decade. Essentially novelizations of earlier dramatic themes, they divide neatly into two discrete areas of content: on the one hand the urban world of tower blocks and tenements; on the other the remoter regions of Wales. The former represents the fallen domain of the city into which, during the final two decades of his life, Hanley often claimed he had descended. However, despite his chronic pessimism, these years were not altogether unhappy: for the first time, thanks to his later lucrative career as script-writer, he and Timmy were at last reasonably financially secure, living first at Camden Square then eventually settling in a very well-appointed flat in Parliament Hill, North London, close to his very attentive son Liam (himself then working in television) and his wife Hilary. They also continued to meet on social occasions close friends and colleagues in London, particularly Dorothy Baker from the BBC and Nina Froud, Hanley's dramatic agent and literary collaborator (Froud, Baker, 1996).[322] What all this

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[322] There was also evidence of a certain renewal of political faith in Hanley's 'collaboration' with Froud on her translation of Chaliapin's 'autobiography, as told to Maxim Gorky'. In the Introduction Hanley displays that same passionate commitment to the artist of the people as in the earlier Mussorgsky play, ending with the words:

> The great change that Chaliapin dreamed about, that Gorky hoped and worked for, did finally come, and it was sudden and bloody and violent. With all its hopes, its failings, its limitations, indeed its very consequences, one is made to realize that the revolution of 1917 had not arrived a moment too soon. (Hanley, 1968c,

could not compensate for, however, was the loss of Wales. From the evidence of letters there was, for a time, a genuine attempt to return. He had occasionally expressed the wish to live closer to his friend, the German scholar Idris Parry who was at Bangor (the Anglesey coast was a favourite fantasy) (Hanley/Parry 7 11 58): now only a year in London, he was again declaring an intention to settle on the Welsh coast (Ibid, 3 12 63). The fantasy was revived again when, the following year, the Hanleys were given access to a cottage in the grounds of Dynevor Castle, Llandeilo, the country seat of Richard Rhys (the incumbent Lord) who was a Hanley 'patron' and amateur drama producer/director (Hanley/Parry, 27 4 65).[323]

However, despite the conscious representation of personal anxieties, Hanley's late novels of London and Wales also disclose a common concern with the social issue of community in the changing society of post-war Britain and the struggle over its continuing viability and meaning in the later 20th century. *A Woman in the Sky* is a longer exposition of the plight of Mrs Monahan (now re-named Kavanagh) in *One Way Only*: a more chilling study in despair and isolation, and yet boldly suggesting a way beyond through latent sources of collective strength and support. Hanley's key amendments and additions in the novel are the more sympathetic rôles of neighbours and friends - the landlord in the 'Marquis of Granby' and Lil and Eddie in the tower block - all of whom involve themselves in the lives of Brigid - who finally succumbs to suicide - and her surviving friend Lena Biddulph the compulsive shop-lifter. Here the urban space is reclaimed on behalf of a working-class autonomy, against a bureaucratic desire to contain and to manage, to represent and to assimilate. Lena's final gesture towards closure is to wrest from the interfering Rev. Tench and the well-meaning probation officer, her friend's surviving letters to the imaginary son. The struggle is both textual and social: between a middle-class sensibility which conceives of ordinary suffering as sobering and cathartic - a fetishistic desire which likes to lose itself 'in among the worn, now warm, filthy pieces of paper, secure in their own ink' - and a working-class anger at misappropriation:

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p. 33)

[323] It was Rhys who had sponsored and directed the stage version of *Say Nothing* at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, August to September 1962.

> He only came out of a cup but was me that kept him standing up for her. *Me*. Kept her alive, them letters did. You weren't there. Wouldn't bloody know *ever*. Got his breath in her ears, got his hair in her eyes, just think of that. My son as well as hers. Give me the letters. (Hanley, 1973, pp. 147, 172-3)

On the other hand *A Dream Journey* initially seems to retreat into the more secluded space of the artist and his self-preoccupations. This unusually long novel returns to the tenement world of Lena and Clem - first encountered in *No Directions* - still surviving in contemporary London. Knowing the full extent of Hanley's life-long personal and social struggles, it reads convincingly as classic autobiographical fiction: however, when the reader is propelled back into a different but no less familiar past of 'Yesterday', a substantial middle section which virtually reproduces word-for-word the text of the original novel, it is clear that the personal contests with other textual priorities. The publication in this form is the result of a long project originally committed to extending *No Directions* into a trilogy (Hanley/Parry, 20 12 56), but its energies had been diverted into the production of a play version broadcast on the Third Programme the previous year. Already, here, there are evident changes of focus and emphasis, principally devoted to Lena's more active and supportive rôle in Clem's career, but there is also aural evidence in the radio recording of an explicit class antagonism between discrete floors and areas of the house: a distinct difference between Clem's working-class and Lena's upper-class accents; the sailor and Cis's vulgarly slurred speech in the green room below; the airman Robinson's upper-class trilled disdain for the other tenants; Richard Jones's provincial whine.

The novel also preserves the class differences, yet there is a more explicit desire for communal feeling and mutual support, with the thoughts and memories of Lena constituting a personal and collective unifying principle. Hanley, in returning through dream to that particular literary moment is recapturing a time when a genuine cultural and social commonality seemed possible, even though his text often denies this. Thus, despite it being a novel of intense conflicts, a homologous relation is constructed between the mutual support of the tenants in time of war and Lena and Clem's lifetime of mutual devotion in the cause of his art. Around the final tragic death of the artist a set of complex meanings about his failures and successes coalesces, in which there is a strongly

autobiographical component. If this is true, then clear analogies are drawn between the artist's domestic and affective life and Hanley's, but also between Clem's experimentally ambitious canvases and the novelist's own 'baggy monsters'. The descriptions of a Stevens work spreading 'right across five canvases a whole day in an old woman's life' or one of 'monstrous clouds tearing across a canvas six foot by eight, a towering mountain, a sea sick green' have that quality of uncompromising excess which is at once both Hanley's strength and weakness (Hanley, 1976, pp. 34, 43). In respect of the latter a final suggestion that the entire artistic project was egregiously wasteful, even futile, is interjected; but the novel itself constitutes a determined self-referential rejoinder to Lena's despairing reservations, an even stronger implicit assertion that there is a quality of worth in the sheer breadth and ambition of the canvas which goes beyond the level of her regrets and the critic Cruickshank's accusations of 'aimlessness' (Ibid, p. 365).

A comparable textual struggle exists in the two works that together constitute Hanley's final testament. Again, both were developed out of former projects, this time from Hanley's chronic fascination with Welsh rurality. However, the significant new factor is that they were written long after Hanley's departure from his beloved Wales and are thus also subject to elements of disillusion. What they contain in terms of community is only a remembered, a residual sense of its importance, in a memorial tribute to an idealized past. As with his novels of the inner city, the idea of community is in struggle with that of social despair, so that what often supersedes all other considerations is a profound sense of something having deteriorated in the rural psyche, an often overwhelming sense of degradation. In the last published novel, *A Kingdom* (1978), a strong suspicion of an unnamed transgression is attached to the past of a hill-farming family; a suggestion that they were somehow compelled to move to their present isolation. The elder daughter Cadi, who alone has helped her father scrape a hard living from their smallholding for twenty years, awaits the arrival of her younger sister for his funeral. His death is the occasion for an assessment of the 'strange shutaway life' in the light of the younger Lucy having 'escaped' to comfortable suburbia. Thus the novel is centrally concerned with the clash of urban and rural values, in which the iron discipline and fear of the father's regime, his abuse of their mother is contrasted unfavourably with Lucy's marriage to solid

and dependable David.[324] What, however, the latter life singularly lacks are those qualities of 'simplicity' where words such as 'anchored', 'rooted' 'hard-working' 'utter absorption' conserve the rural as the communal ideal. Whatever the father's sins, Cadi's stoicism and determination will endure in harmony with nature and her neighbours.

If that somewhat idealizes Hanley's Wales then the radio play *Another World* (1980) achieves a similar effect but with more complex implications.[325] Like its companion play *A Walk in the Sea*, with which it shares certain characteristics, it is set in a different Wales, in the northern seaside town of Garthmeilo, a thinly disguised Llandudno. It focuses on three once settled and relatively contented members of rural communities: Miss Vaughan, who once inhabited a cottage idyll but now types for a local solicitor; Islwid Jones, from the mountains, one-time sailor and now general hotel factotum; and the Rev. Mervyn Thomas, who has ambitiously forsaken his rural parish of Hengoed for a town dominated by the English petit-bourgeoisie. As their new worlds of private anguish and obsession come to a point of crisis in the dismal environment of the resort, it is only Jones who achieves a measure of resolution and accepts a life of dependency on the hotel proprietor Mrs Gandell. Miss Vaughan, however, has retreated into a private madness, one which ignores the obsessive love of Rev. Thomas who, observed by Jones, regularly creeps up to her room where he makes soft and plaintive entreaties outside her door:

> THOMAS: Once a bishop said to me, "Thomas, the church lights up your face" (pause). But in your own, Miss Vaughan, I see an ocean of loss. Ah! I could make you <u>happy</u>. (Hanley, 1980, p. 2)

The tone closely echoes Dylan Thomas's draper, Mr Edwards, infatuated with Miss Price

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[324] There is even a hint of the fear of incest in Cadi's experience of her father suddenly appearing in her room in the dead of night (Hanley, 1978. pp. 51, 52). See also Hanley's short radio play *The Silence* (1968) which, as Dorothy Baker points out, also explores this theme (Baker, 1996).

[325] The first tentative exploration of this theme was the shorter radio play, *Miss Williams* (1960), transformed into a television version, broadcast with a title not of Hanley's choosing, *The Inner World of Miss Vaughan*, (1964). He restored the original title for the novel, *Another World* (1972) and its final radio adaptation in 1980.

in *Under Milk Wood*, but Hanley has not Thomas's rhythmic charm. Miss Vaughan is, like Miss Bealby, destined for an inevitable encounter along the shore: as she walks towards the sea, her sexually enthralled devotee Rev. Thomas is powerless to intervene as she acts upon what Hanley in the novel version calls 'her moment':

> He saw her raise her hands in the air, as she went on, further and further in, as the sea pulled, as the moment died in him, as he opened his mouth to speak and could not, as he fell on his face again and lay there, and lay there, inert, and the light going fast... (Hanley, 1972, p. 200)

The above extract does not constitute the final moment of closure in the novel version but reappears as such in the later, but arguably original, radio form. Therefore it seems fitting that, in the last years of his life, Hanley returns to that instinctive means of novelistic resolution, a final immersion in the sea. In that return there is something of vital interest and significance for his particular writer's journey or metaphorical quest. Despite the fact that these characters do not always re-establish the principle of collective association there is often, at least a latent longing for the idea of a 'true community'. That Hanley doesn't quite sustain that idea in his last years, when he himself succumbs to expressions of despair, and to a sense of irredeemable loss, should not detract from our recognition of his achievement, the fact of his making those 'journeys', of daring to confront those battles over meaning. Rather it is a testimony to the truth of his own personal struggle - a lifetime of endurance against the overwhelming social and cultural odds.

CONCLUSION

Although this thesis has concentrated on James Hanley as a single representative figure, the struggle of his life and career has implications for an understanding of working-class writing in particular and of culture in general. Against the critical commonplace that the former is only intelligible in realist terms, Hanley has here been identified as a modernist, an assertion which has consequences for the way in which modernism itself must be understood: that is to say in terms of the dialectic. As the social and cultural conflicts in Hanley's career have shown, modernism cannot be adequately represented by any singular or monist definition; rather it is constituted by by two or more conflicting socio-cultural components determined by a society in crisis or at moments of social transition. Interpreting modernism from a working-class perspective discloses the presence of a pervasive social conflict - a class struggle - which takes place both at the level of ordinary social reality (the 'life-world') and at the level of texts. Working-class intervention in the dominant culture involves an engagement with already existing artistic methods, aesthetics, attitudes and values, which inevitably exert the influence of their own established priorities. Yet writers of the working class, in turn, can significantly alter the generality of 'aesthetic experience' when, within that process of struggle, they 'illuminate a life-historical situation' and relate it to 'life problems' (Habermas, 1993, p. 106). As this thesis has tried to argue, the particular propensity of such a writing derives from those qualities of working-class experience which afford a unique expression of the social totality, challenging those restrictive aspects of bourgeois thought which - both artistically and critically - reduce the function of art to affirmation or consolation. Hanley, as also argued, has sought his own forms of consolation in the sea and in the isolation of rural retreat, but the 'truth content' of his works cannot be discovered in this tendency alone, but in both this and a countervailing refusal of any artistic totalization or aesthetic unity; in an inherent dialectical quality which preserves the textual contradictions and tensions.

For the purposes of a general approach to literary culture there is one final conclusion to be drawn; namely that there are, within the context of a relativizing

postmodernism, opportunities to recover meanings from the category of class. Hanley's intervention is a version of what Habermas calls 'the re-appropriation of the expert's culture from the standpoint of the life-world', an implicit refusal of modern culture's autonomy and a reforging of its link with 'everyday praxis' (Habermas, 1993, p. 107). Therefore, the continuing relevance of studying writers like Hanley is that he returns us to those historical periods of modernism in which cultural matters were precisely about struggle between competing meanings of tradition, reality, art, and history. To recover those writers of the 1930s, or those of any other significant moment of the 20th century - including the increasing number of latter-day writers from working-class and other marginal cultures - is to assert that 'the project of modernity' is incomplete and that a still radical, alternative position can be established from which to address and to challenge the 'cultural dominant' of 'late capitalism' (Jameson, 1991, p. 6).

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